



A comprehensive list of

Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt

Compiled and edited by L.C.F.

Editor's Note

Dear reader,

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

No book that I have read on deities of Ancient Egypt has managed to cover all of them. Some of them were good and some were most unsatisfactory. Those good are either out of print or cost too much money. In either case they are inaccessible to many earnest researchers.

Urged by personal need of such a source this book was created. Material used here has been gathered up from many sources. My major source were pages from Wikipedia and books from my own library. It was my intention to gather up as many deities as possible, add their relevant images where possible and to give reader a list of external sources that might help him with further research. Texts were edited where needed. Reader will notice that some deities have but a few sentences. This is because we either have no more material or existing material wasn't found reliable. In most such cases links to external resources were left for you to continue your research. I hope you enjoy this material and that you will find it useful.

It took me almost two years to compile the whole thing, read and re-read everything that was put into this book. It is by no means perfect. If you spot an error please let me know. My sincere thanks goes to Wikipedia team for keeping knowledge free. Also, I wish to thank A.U.M. for reminding me every once in a while that this book needs to be finished.

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Love is the law, love under will.

L.C.F.

☉ in ☽ ♀ in ♀, Anno IVxxi

Contents

Articles

Introduction	1
Ancient Egyptian deities	1
Egyptian mythology	21
Gods and Goddesses	38
Aken the ferryman	38
Aker (god)	38
Am-heh	39
Ammit	40
Amun	42
Amunet	52
Andjety	53
Anhur	54
Anit	56
Anput	57
Anti (mythology)	58
Anubis	59
Anuket	63
Apep	67
Apis (god)	72
Arensnuphis	78
Ash (god)	79
Astarte	80
Aswan	85
Aten	89
Atum	92
Ba-Pef	94
Babi (mythology)	94
Banebdjedet	95
Bastet	96
Bat (goddess)	102
Bata (god)	106
Bes	107

Buchis	110
Duamutef	111
Eye of Ra	112
Four sons of Horus	120
Geb	125
Ha (mythology)	127
Hapi (Nile god)	127
Hapi (Son of Horus)	129
Hathor	131
Hatmehit	138
Hedetet	139
Heh (god)	139
Heka (god)	141
Hemen	142
Hemsut	144
Heqet	144
Heryshaf	145
Hesat	147
Horus	148
Hu (mythology)	156
Iabet	157
Iah	158
Iat	159
Ihy	159
Imentet	160
Imiut fetish	160
Imset	161
Isis	162
Iunit	171
Iusaaset	171
Kebechet	175
Khensit	176
Khenti-Amentiu	176
Khenti-kheti	177
Khepri	178
Khnum	180
Khonsu	182
Kothar-wa-Khasis	185

Kuk	186
Maahes	187
Maat	189
Mafdet	195
Mandulis	196
Mehen	197
Mehet-Weret	198
Menhit	199
Meret	200
Meretseger	201
Meskhenet	203
Min (god)	205
Mnevis	207
Montu	208
Mut	210
Nebethetepet	214
Nefertem	215
Nehebkau	217
Nehmetawy	217
Neith	218
Nekhbet	221
Neper (mythology)	222
Nephthys	223
Nu (mythology)	231
Nut (goddess)	232
Osiris	236
Pakhet	246
Petbe	248
Petsuchos	248
Ptah	249
Qebehsenuef	254
Qebui	255
Qetesh	255
Queen of heaven (antiquity)	257
Ra	261
Raet-Tawy	267
Rem (mythology)	268
Renenutet	268

Repyt	269
Resheph	270
Satet	272
Seker	273
Sekhmet	275
Serapis	279
Serket	283
Seshat	285
Set (mythology)	288
Shai	294
Shed (deity)	294
Shesmetet	295
Shezmu	296
Shu (Egyptian deity)	298
Sia (god)	299
Sobek	300
Sopdet	305
Sopdu	306
Statue of Sekhmet	307
Ta-Bitjet	308
Tatenen	308
Taweret	310
Tefnut	313
Tenenet	315
Theban Triad	316
Thoth	317
Tutu (Egyptian god)	324
Unut	325
Wadj-wer	325
Wadjet	326
Weneg (Egyptian deity)	330
Wepset	331
Wepwawet	332
Werethekau	334
Wosret	335
Hellenic era	336
Harpocrates	336

Hermanubis	339
Hermes Trismegistus	341
Nilus (mythology)	348
Osiris-Dionysus	349

Misc 350

Aaru	350
Astennu	351
Atef	351
Benben	352
Kneph	353
Maat Kheru	353
Matet boat	354
Nebu	354
Seqtet boat	355
Tyet	355
Was	356

References

Article Sources and Contributors	357
Image Sources, Licenses and Contributors	368

Article Licenses

License	375
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Introduction

Ancient Egyptian deities

Ancient Egyptian deities are the gods and goddesses who were worshipped in ancient Egypt. The beliefs and rituals surrounding these gods formed the core of ancient Egyptian religion, which emerged along with them sometime in prehistory. Deities represented natural forces and phenomena, and the Egyptians supported and appeased them through offerings and rituals so that these forces would continue to function according to *maat*, or divine order. After the founding of the Egyptian state around 3100 BC, the authority to perform these tasks was controlled by the pharaoh, who claimed to be the gods' sole representative and managed the temples where the rituals were carried out.

The gods' complex characteristics were expressed in myths and in intricate relationships between deities: family ties, loose groups and hierarchies, and combinations of separate gods into one. Deities' diverse appearances in art—as animals, humans, objects, and combinations of different forms—also alluded, through symbolism, to their essential features.



The gods Osiris, Anubis, and Horus

In different eras, various gods were said to hold the highest position in divine society, including the solar deity Ra, the mysterious god Amun, and the mother goddess Isis. The highest deity was usually credited with the creation of the world and often connected with the life-giving power of the sun. Some scholars have argued, based in part on Egyptian writings about these higher gods, that the Egyptians came to recognize a single divine power that lay behind all things and was present in all the other deities. But they never abandoned their original polytheistic view of the world, except possibly during the era of Atenism in the 14th century BC, when official religion focused exclusively on the impersonal sun god Aten.

Gods were believed to be present throughout the world, capable of influencing natural events and human lives. Humans interacted with them in the temples and in unofficial shrines, for personal reasons as well as for the larger goals of state rites. Egyptians prayed for divine help, used rituals to compel deities to act, and called upon them for advice. Humans' relations with their gods were a fundamental part of Egyptian society.

Definition

"Deity" in hieroglyphs
or
or
<i>ntr</i> "god" ^[1]
<i>ntr.t</i> "goddess" ^[1]

The beings in ancient Egyptian tradition who might be labeled as deities are difficult to count. Egyptian texts list the names of many deities whose nature is unknown and make vague, indirect references to other gods who are not even named.^[2] The Egyptologist James P. Allen estimates that more than 1,400 deities are named in Egyptian texts,^[3] whereas his colleague Christian Leitz says there are "thousands upon thousands" of gods.^[4]

The Egyptian terms for these beings were *ntr*, "god", and its feminine form *ntr.t*, "goddess".^[5] Scholars have tried to discern the original nature of the gods by proposing etymologies for these words, but none of these suggestions has gained acceptance, and the terms' origin remains obscure. The hieroglyphs that were used as ideograms and determinatives in writing these words show some of the characteristics that the Egyptians connected with divinity.^[6] The most common of these signs is a flag flying from a pole; similar objects were placed at the entrances of temples, representing the presence of a deity, throughout ancient Egyptian history. Other such hieroglyphs include a falcon, reminiscent of several early gods who were depicted as falcons, and a seated male or female deity.^[7] The feminine form could also be written with an egg as determinative, connecting goddesses with creation and birth, or with a cobra, reflecting the use of the cobra to depict many female deities.^[6]

The Egyptians distinguished *ntrw*, "gods", from *rmt*, "people", but the meanings of the Egyptian and the English terms do not match perfectly. The term *ntr* may have applied to any being that was in some way outside the sphere of everyday life.^[8] Deceased humans were called *ntr* because they were considered to be like the gods,^[9] whereas the term was rarely applied to many of Egypt's lesser supernatural beings, which modern scholars often call "demons".^[4] Egyptian religious art also depicts places, objects, and concepts in human form. These personified ideas range from deities that were important in myth and ritual to obscure beings, only mentioned once or twice, that may be little more than metaphors.^[10]

Confronting these blurred distinctions between gods and other beings, scholars have proposed various definitions of a "deity". One widely accepted definition,^[4] suggested by Jan Assmann, says that a deity has a cult, is involved in some aspect of the universe, and is described in mythology or other forms of written tradition.^[11] According to a different definition, by Dimitri Meeks, *ntr* applied to any being that was the focus of ritual. From this perspective, "gods" included the king, who was called a god after his coronation rites, and deceased souls, who entered the divine realm through funeral ceremonies. Likewise, the preeminence of the great gods was maintained by the ritual devotion that was performed for them across Egypt.^[12]

Origins

The first written evidence of deities in Egypt comes from the Early Dynastic Period (c. 3100–2686 BC).^[13] Deities must have emerged sometime in the preceding Predynastic Period (before 3100 BC) and grown out of prehistoric religious beliefs. Predynastic artwork depicts a variety of animal and human figures. Some of these images, such as stars and cattle, are reminiscent of important features of Egyptian religion in later times, but in most cases there is not enough evidence to say whether the images are connected with deities. As Egyptian society grew more sophisticated, clearer signs of religious activity appeared.^[14] The earliest known temples appeared in the last centuries of the predynastic era,^[15] along with images that resemble the iconographies of known deities: the falcon

that represents Horus and several other gods, the crossed arrows that stand for Neith,^[16] and the enigmatic "Set animal" that represents Set.^[17]

Many Egyptologists and anthropologists have suggested theories about how the gods developed in these early times.^[18] Gustave Jéquier, for instance, thought the Egyptians first revered primitive fetishes, then deities in animal form, and finally deities in human form, whereas Henri Frankfort argued that the gods must have been envisioned in human form from the beginning.^[16] Some of these theories are now regarded as too simplistic,^[19] and more current ones, such as Siegfried Morenz' hypothesis that deities emerged as humans began to distinguish themselves from and personify their environment, are difficult to prove.^[16]



Late Predynastic statue of the baboon god Hedj-Wer

Predynastic Egypt originally consisted of small, independent villages.^[20] Because many deities in later times were strongly tied to particular towns and regions, many scholars have suggested that the pantheon formed as disparate communities coalesced into larger states, spreading and intermingling the worship of the old local deities. But others have argued that the most important predynastic gods were, like other elements of Egyptian culture, present all across the country despite the political divisions within it.^[21]

The final step in the formation of Egyptian religion was the unification of Egypt, in which rulers from Upper Egypt made themselves pharaohs of the entire country.^[14] These sacred kings and their subordinates assumed the exclusive right to interact with the gods,^[22] and kingship became the unifying focus of the religion.^[14]

New gods continued to emerge after this transformation. Some important deities like Isis and Amun are not known to have appeared until the Old Kingdom (c. 2686–2181 BC).^[23] Places and concepts could suddenly inspire the creation of a deity to represent them,^[24] and deities were sometimes created to serve as opposite-sex counterparts to established gods or goddesses.^[25] Kings were said to be divine, although only a few continued to be worshipped long after their deaths. Some non-royal humans were said to have the favor of the gods and were venerated accordingly.^[26] This veneration was usually short-lived, but the court architects Imhotep and Amenhotep son of Hapu were regarded as gods centuries after their lifetimes,^[27] as were some other officials.^[28]

Through contact with neighboring civilizations, the Egyptians also adopted foreign deities. Dedun, who is first mentioned in the Old Kingdom, may have come from Nubia, and Baal and Astarte, among others, were adopted from Canaanite religion during the New Kingdom (c. 1550–1070 BC).^[29] In Greek and Roman times, from 332 BC to the early centuries AD, deities from across the Mediterranean world were revered in Egypt, but the native gods remained, and they often absorbed the cults of these newcomers into their own worship.^[30]

Characteristics

Modern knowledge of Egyptian beliefs about the gods is mostly drawn from religious writings produced by the nation's scribes and priests. These people were the elite of Egyptian society and were very distinct from the general populace, most of whom were illiterate. Little is known about how well this broader population knew or understood the sophisticated ideas that the elite developed.^[31] Commoners' perceptions of the divine may have differed from those of the priests. The populace may, for example, have mistaken the religion's symbolic statements about the gods and their actions for literal truth.^[32] But overall, what little is known about popular religious belief is consistent with the elite tradition. The two traditions form a largely cohesive vision of the gods and their nature.^[33]

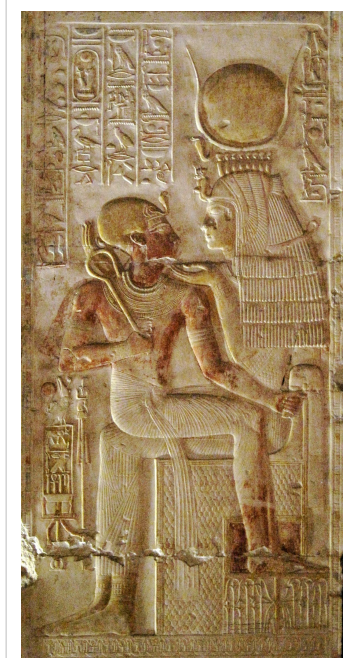
Roles

Most Egyptian deities represent natural or social phenomena. The gods were generally said to be immanent in these phenomena—to be present within nature.^[34] The types of phenomena they represented include physical places and objects as well as abstract concepts and forces.^[35] The god Shu was the deification of all the world's air; the goddess Meretseger oversaw a limited region of the earth, the Theban Necropolis; and the god Sia personified the abstract notion of perception.^[36] Major gods often had many roles and were involved in several types of phenomena. For instance, Thoth was a god of the moon. Because the moon was essential to the reckoning of the calendar, he was also in charge of timekeeping, calculation, writing, and the scribes who performed these activities in Egyptian society.^[37] Gods could share the same role in nature; Ra, Atum, Khepri, Horus, and other deities acted as sun gods.^[38] Despite their diverse functions, most gods had an overarching role in common: maintaining *maat*, the universal order that was a central principle of Egyptian religion and was itself personified as a goddess.^[39] But some deities represented disruption to *maat*. Most prominently, Apep was the force of chaos, constantly threatening to annihilate the order of the universe, and Set was an ambivalent member of divine society who could both fight disorder and foment it.^[40]

Not all aspects of existence were seen as deities. Although many deities were connected with the Nile, the river that was essential to Egyptian civilization, no god personified it in the way that Ra personified the sun.^[41] Short-lived phenomena, like rainbows or eclipses, were not represented by gods;^[42] neither were elements like fire and water or many other components of the world.^[43]

The roles of each deity were fluid, and each god could expand its nature to take on new characteristics. As a result, gods' roles are difficult to categorize or define. But despite their flexibility, the gods always had limited abilities and spheres of influence. Not even the creator god could reach beyond the boundaries of the cosmos that he created, and even Isis, though she was said to be the cleverest of the gods, was not omniscient.^[44] Richard H. Wilkinson, however, argues that some texts from the late New Kingdom suggest that, as beliefs about the god Amun evolved, he was thought to approach omniscience and omnipresence and to transcend the limits of the world in a way that other deities did not.^[45]

The deities with the most limited and specialized domains are often called "minor divinities" or "demons" in modern writing, although there is no firm definition for these terms.^[46] Among these lesser deities, Egyptologist Claude Traunecker draws a distinction between "genies"—the specialized patron spirits of certain places, objects, or activities—and demons, who have a more dangerous character. Many demons are hostile, causing illness and other troubles among humans.^[47] Their power can also be protective; they may guard certain places in the Duat, the realm of the dead, or advise and watch over humans. Demons often act as servants and messengers to the greater gods, but their position in the hierarchy is not fixed. The protective deities Bes and Taweret originally had minor, demon-like roles, but over time they came to be credited with great influence.^[46]



Isis, a mother goddess and a patroness of kingship, holds Pharaoh Seti I in her lap.

Behavior

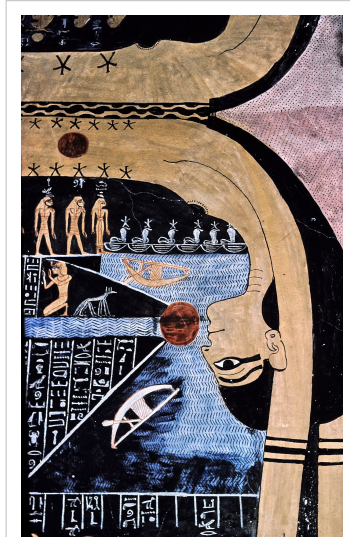
Divine behavior was believed to govern all of nature.^[48] Except for the few deities who disrupted the divine order,^[40] the gods' actions maintained *maat* and created and sustained all living things.^[39] They did this work using a force the Egyptians called *heka*, a term usually translated as "magic". *Heka* was a fundamental power that the creator god used to form the world and the gods themselves.^[49]

The gods' actions in the present are described and praised in hymns and funerary texts.^[50] In contrast, mythology mainly concerns the gods' actions during a vaguely imagined past in which the gods were present on earth and interacted directly with humans. The events of this past time set the pattern for the events of the present. Periodic occurrences were tied to events in the mythic past; the succession of each new pharaoh, for instance, reenacted Horus' accession to the throne of his father Osiris.^[51] Myths are metaphors for the gods' actions, which humans cannot fully understand. They contain seemingly contradictory ideas, each expressing a particular perspective on divine events. The contradictions in myth are part of the Egyptians' many-faceted approach to religious belief—what Henri Frankfort called a "multiplicity of approaches" to understanding the gods.^[52]

In myth, the gods behave much like humans. They feel emotion; they can eat, drink, fight, weep, sicken, and die.^[53] Some have unique character traits.^[54] Set is aggressive and impulsive, and Thoth, patron of knowledge, is prone to long-winded speeches. Yet overall, the gods are more like archetypes than well drawn characters.^[55] Their behavior is inconsistent, and their thoughts and motivations are rarely stated.^[56] Most myths about them lack highly developed characters and plots, because the symbolic meaning of the myths was more important than elaborate storytelling.^[57]

The first divine act is the creation of the cosmos, described in several creation myths. They focus on different gods, each of which may act as creator deities.^[58] The eight gods of the Ogdoad, who represent the chaos that precedes creation, give birth to the sun god, who establishes order in the newly formed world; Ptah, who embodies thought and creativity, gives form to all things by envisioning and naming them;^[59] Atum produces all things as emanations of himself;^[3] and Amun, according to the myths promoted by his priesthood, preceded and created the other creator gods.^[60] These and other versions of the events of creation were not seen as contradictory. Each gives a different perspective on the complex process by which the organized universe and its many deities emerged from undifferentiated chaos.^[61] The period following creation, in which a series of gods rule as kings over the divine society, is the setting for most myths. The gods struggle against the forces of chaos and among each other before withdrawing from the human world and installing the historical kings of Egypt to rule in their place.^[62]

A recurring theme in these myths is the effort of the gods to maintain *maat* against the forces of disorder. They fight vicious battles with the forces of chaos at the start of creation. Ra and Apep, battling each other each night, continue this struggle into the present.^[63] Another prominent theme is the gods' death. The clearest instance of a god dying is the myth of Osiris' murder, in which that god is resurrected as ruler of the Duat.^{[64][65]} The sun god is also said to grow old during his daily journey across the sky, sink into the Duat at night, and emerge as a young child at dawn. In the process he comes into contact with the rejuvenating water of primordial chaos. Funerary texts that depict Ra's journey through the Duat also show the corpses of gods who are enlivened along with him. No deity was truly immortal; instead the gods periodically died and were reborn by repeating the events of creation, thus renewing the whole world.^[1] But it was always possible for this cycle to be disrupted and for chaos to return. Some poorly understood Egyptian texts even suggest that this calamity is destined to happen—that the creator god will one day dissolve the order of the world, leaving only himself and Osiris amid the primordial chaos.^[66]



The sky goddess Nut swallows the sun, which travels through her body at night to be reborn at dawn.

Locations

Gods were linked with specific regions of the universe. In Egyptian tradition, the world includes the earth, the sky, and the Duat. Surrounding them is the dark formlessness that existed before creation.^[67] The gods in general were said to dwell in the sky, although gods whose roles were linked with other parts of the universe were said to live in those places instead. Most events of mythology, set in a time before the gods' withdrawal from the human realm, take place in an earthly setting. The deities there sometimes interact with those in the sky. The Duat, in contrast, is treated as a remote and inaccessible place, and the gods who dwell there have difficulty communicating with those in the world of the living.^[68] The space outside the cosmos is also said to be very distant. It too is inhabited by deities, some hostile and some beneficial to the other gods and their orderly world.^[69]



Deities personifying provinces of Egypt

In the time after myth, the gods were said to be either in the sky or invisibly present within the world. Temples were their main means of contact with humanity. Each day, it was believed, the gods moved from the divine realm to their temples, their homes in the human world. There they inhabited the cult images, the statues that depicted deities and allowed humans to interact with them in temple rituals. This movement between realms was sometimes described as a journey between the sky and the earth. As temples were the focal points of Egyptian cities, the god in a city's main temple was the patron god for the city and the surrounding region.^[70] Deities' spheres of influence on earth centered on the towns and regions they presided over.^[67] Many gods had more than one cult center, and their local ties changed over time. They could establish themselves in new cities, or their range of influence could contract. Therefore, a given deity's main cult center in historical times is not necessarily his or her place of origin.^[71]

Names and epithets

In Egyptian belief, names express the fundamental nature of the things to which they refer. In keeping with this belief, the names of deities often relate to their roles or origins. The name of the predatory goddess Sekhmet means "powerful one", the name of the mysterious god Amun means "hidden one", and the name of the goddess Nekhbet, who was worshipped in the city of Nekheb, means "she of Nekheb". But many other names have no certain meaning, even when the gods who bear them are closely tied to a single role. The names of the sky goddess Nut and the earth god Geb do not resemble the Egyptian terms for *sky* and *earth*.^[72]

The Egyptians also devised false etymologies giving more meanings to divine names.^[72] A passage in the *Coffin Texts* renders the name of the funerary god Sokar as *sk r*, meaning "cleaning of the mouth", to link his name with his role in the Opening of the Mouth ritual,^[73] while one in the *Pyramid Texts* says the name is based on words shouted by Osiris, connecting Sokar with the most important funerary deity.^[74]

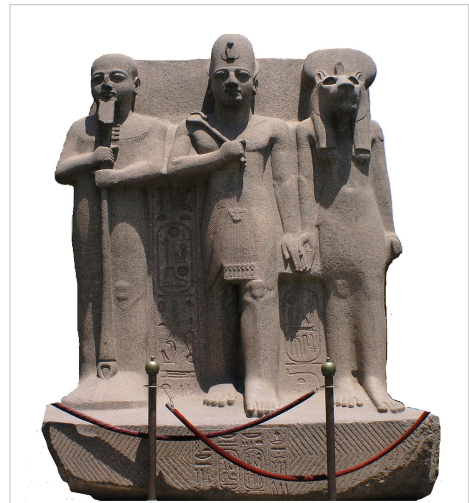
The gods were believed to have many names. Among them were secret names that conveyed their true natures more profoundly than others. To know the true name of a deity was to have power over it. The importance of names is demonstrated by a myth in which Isis poisons the superior god Ra and refuses to cure him unless he reveals his secret name to her. Upon learning the name, she tells it to her son, Horus, and by learning it they gain greater knowledge and power.^[75]

In addition to their names, gods were given epithets, like "possessor of splendor", "ruler of Abydos", or "lord of the sky", that describe some aspect of their roles or their worship. Because of the gods' multiple and overlapping roles, deities can have many epithets—with more important gods accumulating more titles—and the same epithet can apply to many deities. The host of divine names and titles expresses the gods' multifarious nature.^[76]

Relationships

Egyptian deities are connected in a complex and shifting array of relationships. A god's connections and interactions with other deities helped define its character. Thus Isis, as the mother and protector of Horus, was a great healer as well as the patroness of kings. Such relationships were the base material from which myths were formed.^[77]

Family relationships are a common type of connection between gods. Deities often form male and female pairs, reflecting the importance of procreation in Egyptian religious thought.^[79] Families of three deities, with a father, mother, and child, represent the creation of new life and the succession of the father by the child, a pattern that connects divine families with royal succession.^[80] Osiris, Isis, and Horus formed the quintessential family of this type. The pattern they set grew more widespread over time, so that many deities in local cult centers, like Ptah, Sekhmet, and their child Nefertum at Memphis and Amun, Mut, and Khonsu at Thebes, were assembled into family triads.^[81] Genealogical connections like these are changeable, in keeping with the multiple perspectives in Egyptian belief.^[82] Hathor, as a fertility goddess, could act as mother to any child god, including the child form of the sun god, although in other circumstances she was the sun god's daughter.^[83]



The gods Ptah and Sekhmet flank the king, who takes the role of their child, Nefertum.^[78]

Other divine groups were composed of deities with interrelated roles, or who together represented a region of the Egyptian mythological cosmos. There were sets of gods for the hours of the day and night and for each nome (province) of Egypt. Some of these groups contain a specific, symbolically important number of deities.^[84] Paired gods can stand for opposite but interrelated concepts that are part of a greater unity. Ra, who is dynamic and light-producing, and Osiris, who is static and shrouded in darkness, merge into a single god each night.^[85] Groups of three are linked with plurality in ancient Egyptian thought, and groups of four connote completeness.^[84] Rulers in the late New Kingdom promoted a particularly important group of three gods above all others: Amun, Ra, and Ptah. These deities stood for the plurality of all gods, as well as for their own cult centers (the three major cities of Thebes, Heliopolis, and Memphis) and for many threefold sets of concepts in Egyptian religious thought.^[86] Sometimes Set, the patron god of the Nineteenth Dynasty kings^[87] and the embodiment of disorder within the world, was added to this group, which emphasized a single coherent vision of the pantheon.^[88]

Nine, the product of three and three, represents a multitude, so the Egyptians called several large groups "enneads",^[89] or sets of nine, even if they had more than nine members. The most prominent ennead was the Ennead of Heliopolis, an extended family of deities descended from the creator god Atum, which incorporates many important gods.^[84] The term "ennead" was often extended to include all of Egypt's deities.^[90]

This divine assemblage had a vague and changeable hierarchy. Gods with broad influence in the cosmos or who were mythologically older than others had higher positions in divine society. At the apex of this society was the king of the gods, who was usually identified with the creator deity.^[90] In different periods of Egyptian history, different gods were most frequently said to hold this exalted position. Horus was the most important god in the Early Dynastic Period, Ra rose to preeminence in the Old Kingdom, Amun was supreme in the New, and in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, Isis was the divine queen and creator goddess.^[91]

Manifestations and combinations

The gods were believed to manifest themselves in many forms.^[94] The Egyptians had a complex conception of the human soul, made up of several parts. The spirits of the gods were composed of many of these same elements.^[95] The *ba* was the component of the human or divine soul that affected the world around it. Any visible manifestation of a god's power could be called its *ba*; thus, the sun was called the *ba* of Ra.^[96] A depiction of a deity was considered a *ka*, another component of its being, which acted as a vessel for that deity's *ba* to inhabit. The cult images of gods that were the focus of temple rituals, as well as the sacred animals that represented certain deities, were believed to house divine *bas* in this way.^[97] Gods could be ascribed many *bas* and *kas*, which were sometimes given names representing different aspects of the god's nature.^[98] Everything in existence was said to be one of the *kas* of Atum the creator god, who originally contained all things within himself,^[99] and one deity could be called the *ba* of another, meaning that the first god is a manifestation of the other's power.^[100] Divine body parts could also act as separate deities, like the Eye of Ra and the Hand of Atum, both of which were personified as goddesses.^[101]



Amun-Ra-Kamutef, a form of Amun with the solar characteristics of Ra and the procreative powers connected with Min.^[92] The solar disk on his headdress is taken from Ra, and his erect phallus comes from the iconography of Min.^[93]

Nationally important deities gave rise to local manifestations of themselves, which sometimes absorbed the characteristics of older regional gods.^[102] Horus had many forms that were tied to particular places, including Horus of Nekhen, Horus of Buhen, and Horus of Edfu.^[103] Such local manifestations could be treated almost as separate beings. During the New Kingdom, one man was accused of stealing clothes by an oracle that was supposed to communicate messages from Amun of Pe-Khenty. He consulted two other local oracles of Amun hoping to receive a different judgment.^[104] Gods' manifestations also differed according to their roles. Horus could be a powerful sky god or a vulnerable child, and these forms were sometimes counted as independent deities.^[105]

Gods combined with each other as easily as they divided themselves. A god could be called the *ba* of another, or two or more deities could be joined into one god with a combined name and iconography.^[106] Local gods were linked with greater ones, and deities with similar functions were combined. Ra was connected with the local deity Sobek to form Sobek-Ra; with his fellow patron of kings, Amun, to form Amun-Ra; with the solar form of Horus to form Ra-Horakhty; and with several solar deities as Horemakhet-Khepri-Ra-Atum.^[107] On rare occasion, even deities of different sexes were joined in this way, producing combinations like Osiris-Neith and Mut-Min.^[108] This linking of deities is called syncretism. Unlike other situations for which this term is used, the Egyptian practice was not meant to fuse competing belief systems, although foreign deities could be syncretized with native ones.^[107] Instead, syncretism acknowledged the overlap between the roles of the gods involved, and it extended the sphere of influence for each of them. Syncretic combinations were not permanent; a god who was involved in one combination continued to appear separately and to form new combinations with other deities.^[108] But closely connected deities did sometimes merge. During the Old Kingdom, Horus absorbed several local falcon gods, such as Khenty-irty and Khenty-khety.^[109]

The Aten and possible monotheism

In the reign of Akhenaten (c. 1353–1336 BC) in the mid-New Kingdom, a single solar deity, the Aten, became the sole focus of the state religion. Akhenaten ceased to fund the temples of other deities and erased the gods' names and images on monuments, targeting Amun in particular. This new religious system, sometimes called Atenism, differed dramatically from the polytheistic worship of many gods in all other periods. Whereas, in earlier times, newly important gods were integrated into existing religious beliefs, Atenism insisted on a single understanding of the divine that excluded the traditional multiplicity of perspectives.^[110] Yet Atenism may not have been full monotheism, which totally excludes belief in other deities. There is evidence suggesting that the general populace was still allowed to worship other gods in private. The picture is further complicated by Atenism's apparent tolerance for some other deities, like Shu. For these reasons, the Egyptologist Dominic Montserrat suggested that Akhenaten was monolatrous, worshipping a single deity, but not necessarily monotheistic. In any case, Atenism's aberrant theology did not take root among the Egyptian populace, and Akhenaten's successors returned to traditional beliefs.^[111]

Unity of the divine in traditional religion

Scholars have long debated whether traditional Egyptian religion ever asserted that the multiple gods were, on a deeper level, unified. Reasons for this debate include the practice of syncretism, which might suggest that all the separate gods could ultimately merge into one, and the tendency of Egyptian texts to credit a particular god with power that surpasses all other deities. Another point of contention is the appearance of the word "god" in wisdom literature, where the term does not refer to a specific deity or group of deities.^[112] In the early 20th century, for instance, E. A. Wallis Budge believed that Egyptian commoners were polytheistic, but knowledge of the true monotheistic nature of the religion was reserved for the elite, who wrote the wisdom literature. His contemporary James Henry Breasted thought Egyptian religion was instead pantheistic, with the power of the sun god present in all other gods, while Hermann Junker argued that Egyptian civilization had been originally monotheistic and became polytheistic in the course of its history.^[113]



The god Bes with the attributes of many other deities. Images like this one represent the presence of a multitude of divine powers within a single being.^[114]

In 1971, the Egyptologist Erik Hornung published a study^[115] rebutting these views. He points out that in any given period many deities, even minor ones, were described as superior to all others. He also argues that the unspecified "god" in the wisdom texts is a generic term for whichever deity the reader chooses to revere.^[116] Although the combinations, manifestations, and iconographies of each god were constantly shifting, they were always restricted to a finite number of forms, never becoming fully interchangeable in a monotheistic or pantheistic way. Henotheism, Hornung says, describes Egyptian religion better than other labels. An Egyptian could worship any deity at a particular time and credit it with supreme power in that moment, without denying the other gods or merging them all with the god that he or she focused on. Hornung concludes that the gods were fully unified only in myth, at the time before creation, after which the multitude of gods emerged from a uniform nonexistence.^[117]

Hornung's arguments have greatly influenced other scholars of Egyptian religion, but some still believe that at times the gods were more unified than he allows.^[52] Jan Assmann maintains that the notion of a single deity developed slowly through the New Kingdom, beginning with a focus on Amun-Ra as the all-important sun god.^[118] In his view, Atenism was an extreme outgrowth of

this trend. It equated the single deity with the sun and dismissed all other gods. Then, in the backlash against Atenism, priestly theologians described the universal god in a different way, one that coexisted with traditional polytheism. The one god was believed to transcend the world and all the other deities, while at the same time, the

multiple gods were aspects of the one. According to Assmann, this one god was especially equated with Amun, the dominant god in the late New Kingdom, whereas for the rest of Egyptian history the universal deity could be identified with many other gods.^[119] James P. Allen says that coexisting notions of one god and many gods would fit well with the "multiplicity of approaches" in Egyptian thought, as well as with the henotheistic practice of ordinary worshippers. He says that the Egyptians may have recognized the unity of the divine by "identifying their uniform notion of 'god' with a particular god, depending on the particular situation."^[3]

Descriptions and depictions

Egyptian writings describe the gods' bodies in detail. They are made of precious materials; their flesh is gold, their bones are silver, and their hair is lapis lazuli. They give off a scent that the Egyptians likened to the incense used in rituals. Some texts give precise descriptions of particular deities, including their height and eye color. Yet these characteristics are not fixed; in myths, gods change their appearances to suit their own purposes.^[120] Egyptian texts often refer to deities' true, underlying forms as "mysterious". The Egyptians' visual representations of their gods are therefore not literal. They symbolize specific aspects of each deity's character, functioning much like the ideograms in hieroglyphic writing.^[121] For this reason, the funerary god Anubis is commonly shown in Egyptian art as a dog or jackal, a creature whose scavenging habits threaten the preservation of buried mummies, in an effort to counter this threat and employ it for protection. His black coloring alludes to the color of mummified flesh and to the fertile black soil that Egyptians saw as a symbol of resurrection.^[122]

Most gods were depicted in several ways. Hathor can be shown as a cow, a cobra, a lioness, or a woman with bovine horns or ears. By depicting a given god in different ways, the Egyptians expressed different aspects of its essential nature.^[121] The gods are depicted in a finite number of these symbolic forms, so that deities can often be distinguished from one another by their iconographies. These forms include men and women (anthropomorphism), animals (zoomorphism), and, more rarely, inanimate objects. Combinations of forms, such as gods with human bodies and animal heads, are common.^[7] New forms and increasingly complex combinations arose in the course of history.^[114] Some gods can only be distinguished from others if they are labeled in writing, as with Isis and Hathor.^[123] Because of the close connection between these goddesses, they could both wear the cow-horn headdress that was originally Hathor's alone.^[124]

Certain features of divine images are more useful than others in determining a god's identity. The head of a given divine image is particularly significant.^[125] In a hybrid image, the head represents the original form of the being depicted, so that, as the Egyptologist Henry Fischer put it, "a lion-headed goddess is a lion-goddess in human form, while a royal sphinx, conversely, is a man who has assumed the form of a lion."^[126] Divine headdresses, which range from the same types of crowns used by human kings to large hieroglyphs worn on gods' heads, are another important indicator. In contrast, the objects held in gods' hands tend to be generic.^[125] Male deities hold *was* staffs, goddesses hold stalks of papyrus, and both sexes carry *ankh* signs, representing the Egyptian word for "life", to symbolize their life-giving power.^[127]



Statue of the crocodile god Sobek in fully animal form

The forms in which the gods are shown, although diverse, are limited in many ways. Many creatures that are widespread in Egypt were never used in divine iconography, whereas a few, such as falcons, cobras, and cattle, can each represent many deities. Animals that were absent from Egypt in the early stages of its history were not used as divine images. For instance, the horse, which was only introduced in the Second Intermediate Period (c. 1650–1550 BC), never represented a god. Similarly, the clothes worn by anthropomorphic deities in all periods changed little from the styles used in the Old Kingdom: a kilt, false beard, and often a shirt for male gods and a long, tight-fitting

dress for goddesses.^{[128][129]}

The basic anthropomorphic form varies. Child gods are depicted nude, as are some adult gods when their procreative powers are emphasized.^[130] Certain male deities are given heavy bellies and breasts, signifying either androgyny or prosperity and abundance.^[131] Whereas most male gods have red skin and most goddesses are yellow—the same colors used to depict Egyptian men and women—some are given unusual, symbolic skin colors.^[132] Thus the blue skin and paunchy figure of the god Hapi alluded to the Nile flood he represented and the nourishing fertility it brought.^[133] A few deities, such as Osiris, Ptah, and Min, have a "mummiform" appearance, with their limbs tightly swathed in cloth.^[134] Although these gods resemble mummies, the earliest examples predate the cloth-wrapped style of mummification, and this form may instead hark back to the earliest, limbless depictions of deities.^[135]

Among the inanimate objects that represent deities are the disk-like emblems for the sun and the moon.^[136] Some objects associated with a specific god, like the shield and crossed bows representing Neith (𓏲) or the emblem of Min (𓏲) symbolized the cults of those deities in Predynastic times.^[137] In many cases, the nature of the original object is mysterious.^[138]

Interactions with humans

Relationship with the pharaoh

In official writings, pharaohs are said to be divine, and they are constantly depicted in the company of the deities of the pantheon. Each pharaoh and his predecessors were considered the successors of the gods who had ruled Egypt in mythic prehistory.^[139] Living kings were equated with Horus and called the "son" of many deities, particularly Osiris and Ra; deceased kings were equated with these elder gods.^[140] Pharaohs had their own mortuary temples where rituals were performed for them during their lives and after their deaths.^[141] But few pharaohs were worshipped as gods long after their lifetimes, and non-official texts portray kings in a human light. For these reasons, scholars disagree about how genuinely most Egyptians believed the king to be a god. He may only have been considered divine when he was performing ceremonies.^[142]



Ramesses III presents offerings to Amun

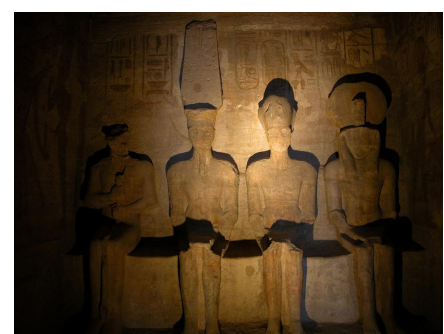
However much it was believed, the king's divine status was the rationale for his role as Egypt's representative to the gods, as he formed a link between the divine and human realms.^[143] The Egyptians believed the gods needed temples to dwell in, as well as the periodic performance of rituals and presentation of offerings to nourish them. These things were provided by the cults that the king oversaw, with their priests and laborers.^[144] Yet, according to royal ideology, temple-building was exclusively the pharaoh's work, as were the rituals that priests usually performed in his stead.^[145] These acts were a part of the king's fundamental role: maintaining *maat*.^[146] The king and the nation he represented provided the gods with *maat* so they could continue to perform their functions, which maintained *maat* in the cosmos so humans could continue to live.^[147]

Presence in the human world

Although the Egyptians believed their gods to be present in the world around them, contact between the human and divine realms was mostly limited to specific circumstances.^[148] In literature, gods may appear to humans in a physical form, but in real life the Egyptians were limited to more indirect means of communication.^[149]

The *ba* of a god was said to periodically leave the divine realm to dwell in the images of that god.^[150] By inhabiting these images, the gods left their concealed state and took on a physical form.^[70] To the Egyptians, a place or object that was *dśr*—"sacred"—was isolated and ritually pure, and thus fit for a god to inhabit.^[151] Temple statues and reliefs, as well as particular sacred animals, like the Apis bull, served as divine intermediaries in this way.^[152] Dreams and trances provided a very different venue for interaction. In these states, it was believed, people could come close to the gods and sometimes receive messages from them.^[153] Finally, according to Egyptian afterlife beliefs, human souls pass into the divine realm after death. The Egyptians therefore believed that in death they would exist on the same level as their gods and fully understand their mysterious nature.^[154]

Temples, where the state rituals were carried out, were filled with images of the gods. The most important temple image was the cult statue in the inner sanctuary. These statues, generally less than life-size, were made of the same precious materials that were said to form the gods' bodies. Many temples had several sanctuaries, each with a cult statue representing one of the gods in a group such as a family triad.^{[150][155]} The city's primary god was envisioned as its lord, employing many of the residents as servants in the divine household that the temple represented. The gods residing in all the temples of Egypt collectively represented the entire Egyptian pantheon.^[156] But many deities—including some important gods as well as those that were minor or hostile—were never given temples of their own, although some were represented in the temples of other gods.^[157]



Ramesses II (second from right) with the gods Ptah, Amun, and Ra in the sanctuary of the Great Temple at Abu Simbel

To insulate the sacred power in the sanctuary from the impurities of the outside world, the Egyptians enclosed temple sanctuaries and greatly restricted access to them. People other than kings and high priests were thus denied contact with cult statues. The only exception was during festival processions, when the statue was carried out of the temple but still enclosed in a portable shrine.^[158] People did have less direct means of interaction. The more public parts of temples often incorporated small places for prayer, from doorways to freestanding chapels near the back of the temple building.^[159] Communities also built and managed small chapels for their own use, and some families had shrines inside their homes.^[160] Despite the gulf that separated humanity from the divine, the Egyptians were surrounded by opportunities to approach their gods.^[161]

Intervention in human lives

Egyptian gods were involved in human lives as well as in the overarching order of nature. This divine influence applied mainly to Egypt, as foreign peoples were traditionally believed to be outside the divine order. But in the New Kingdom, when other nations were under Egyptian control, foreigners were said to be under the sun god's benign rule in the same way that Egyptians were.^[162]

Thoth, as the overseer of time, was said to allot fixed lifespans to both humans and gods.^[163] Other gods were also said to govern the length of human lives, including Meskhenet, who presided over birth, and Shai, the personification of fate.^[164] Thus the time and manner of death was the main meaning of the Egyptian concept of fate, although to some extent, these deities governed other events in life as well. Several texts refer to gods influencing or inspiring human decisions, working through a person's "heart"—the seat of emotion and intellect in Egyptian belief. Deities were also believed to give commands, instructing the king in the governance of his realm and regulating the management of their temples. Egyptian texts rarely mention direct commands given to private persons, and these

commands never evolved into a set of divinely enforced moral codes.^[165] Morality in ancient Egypt was based on the concept of *maat*, which, when applied to human society, meant that everyone should live in an orderly way that did not interfere with the well-being of other people. Because deities were the upholders of *maat*, morality was connected with them. For example, the gods judged humans' moral righteousness after death, and by the New Kingdom, a verdict of innocence in this judgment was believed to be necessary for admittance into the afterlife. But in general, morality was based on practical ways to uphold *maat* in daily life, rather than on strict rules that the gods laid out.^[166]

Humans had free will to ignore divine guidance and the behavior required by *maat*, but by doing so they could bring divine punishment upon themselves.^[167] A deity carried out this punishment using its *ba*, the force that manifested the god's power in the human world. Natural disasters and human ailments were seen as the work of angry divine *bas*.^[168] Conversely, the gods could cure righteous people of illness or even extend their lifespans.^[169] Both these types of intervention were eventually represented by deities: Shed, who emerged in the New Kingdom to represent divine rescue from harm,^[170] and Petbe, an apotropaic god from the late eras of Egyptian history who was believed to avenge wrongdoing.^[171]



Amulet of the god Shed

Egyptian texts take different views on whether the gods are responsible when humans suffer unjustly. Misfortune was often seen as a product of *isfet*, the cosmic disorder that was the opposite of *maat*, and therefore the gods were not guilty of causing evil events. Some deities who were closely connected with *isfet*, such as Set, could be blamed for disorder within the world without placing guilt on the other gods. But some writings do accuse the deities of causing human misery, while others give theodicies in the gods' defense.^[172] Beginning in the Middle Kingdom, several texts connected the issue of evil in the world with a myth in which the creator god fights a human rebellion against his rule and then withdraws from the earth. Because of this human misbehavior, the creator is distant from his creation, allowing suffering to exist. New Kingdom writings do not question the just nature of the gods as strongly as those of the Middle Kingdom. They emphasize humans' direct, personal relationships with deities and the gods' power to intervene in human events. People in this era put faith in specific gods who they hoped would help and protect them through their lives. As a result, upholding the ideals of *maat* grew less important than gaining the gods' favor as a way to guarantee a good life.^[173] Even the pharaohs were regarded as dependent on divine aid, and after the New Kingdom came to an end, government was increasingly influenced by oracles communicating the gods' will.^[174]

Worship

Official religious practices, which maintained *maat* for the benefit of all Egypt, were related to, but distinct from, the religious practices of ordinary people,^[175] who sought the gods' help for their personal problems.^[176]

Official religion involved a variety of rituals, based in temples. Some rites were performed every day, whereas others were festivals, taking place at longer intervals and often limited to a particular temple or deity.^[160] The gods received their offerings in daily ceremonies, in which their statues were clothed, anointed, and presented with food as hymns were recited in their honor.^[177] These offerings, in addition to maintaining *maat* for the gods, celebrated deities' life-giving generosity and encouraged them to remain benevolent rather than vengeful.^[178]

Festivals often involved a ceremonial procession in which a cult image was carried out of the temple in a barque-shaped shrine. These processions served various purposes.^[179] In Roman times, when local deities of all kinds were believed to have power over the Nile inundation, processions in many communities carried temple images to the riverbanks so the gods could invoke a large and fruitful flood.^[180] Processions also traveled between temples, as when the image of Hathor from Dendera Temple visited her consort Horus at the Temple of Edfu.^[179]

Rituals for a god were often based in that deity's mythology. Such rituals were meant to be repetitions of the events of the mythic past, renewing the beneficial effects of the original events.^[181] In the Khoiak festival in honor of Osiris, his death and resurrection were ritually reenacted at a time when crops were beginning to sprout. The returning greenery symbolized the renewal of the god's own life.^[182]

Personal interaction with the gods took many forms. People who wanted information or advice consulted oracles, run by temples, that were supposed to convey gods' answers to questions. Private rituals invoked the gods' power to accomplish personal goals, from healing sickness to cursing enemies.^[184] These rituals used *heka*, the same force of magic that the gods used, which the creator was said to have given to humans so they could fend off misfortune. The performer of a private rite often took on the role of a god in a myth, or even threatened a deity, to involve the gods in accomplishing the goal.^[185] Such rituals coexisted with private offerings and prayers, and all three were accepted means of obtaining divine help.^[186]



A woman worships Ra-Horakhty, who blesses her with rays of light.^[183]

Prayer and private offerings are generally called "personal piety": acts that reflect a close relationship between an individual and a god. Evidence of personal piety is scant before the New Kingdom. Votive offerings and personal names, many of which are theophoric, suggest that commoners felt some connection between themselves and their gods. But firm evidence of devotion to deities became visible only in the New Kingdom, reaching a peak late in that era.^[187] Scholars disagree about the meaning of this change—whether direct interaction with the gods was a new development or an outgrowth of older traditions.^[188] Egyptians now expressed their devotion through a new variety of activities in and around temples.^[189] They recorded their prayers and their thanks for divine help on stelae. They gave offerings of figurines that represented the gods they were praying to, or that symbolized the result they desired; thus a relief image of Hathor and a statuette of a woman could both represent a prayer for fertility. Occasionally, a person took a particular god as a patron, dedicating his or her property or labor to the god's cult. These practices continued into the latest periods of Egyptian history.^[190] Some of the major deities from myth and official religion were rarely invoked in popular worship, but many of the great state gods were important in popular tradition.^[33]

The worship of some Egyptian gods spread to neighboring lands, especially to Canaan and Nubia during the New Kingdom, when those regions were under pharaonic control. In Canaan, the exported deities, including Hathor, Amun, and Set, were often syncretized with native gods, who in turn spread to Egypt.^[191] The Egyptian deities may not have had permanent temples in Canaan,^[192] and their importance there waned after Egypt lost control of the region.^[191] In contrast, many temples to the major Egyptian gods and deified pharaohs were built in Nubia. After the end of Egyptian rule there, the imported gods, particularly Amun, remained part of the religion of Nubia's independent Kushite Kingdom.^[191] Some deities reached farther. Taweret became a goddess in Minoan Crete,^[193] and Amun's oracle at Siwa Oasis was known to and consulted by people across the Mediterranean region.^[194]

Under the Greek Ptolemaic Dynasty and then Roman rule, Greeks and Romans introduced their own deities to Egypt. These newcomers equated the Egyptian gods with their own, as part of the Greco-Roman tradition of *interpretatio graeca*. But the worship of the native gods was not swallowed up by that of foreign ones. Instead, Greek and Roman gods were adopted as manifestations of Egyptian ones, and their cults sometimes incorporated Greek language and philosophy.^[195] Meanwhile, the worship of some Egyptian deities—particularly Isis, the form of Horus named Harpocrates, and the fused Greco-Egyptian god Serapis—spread beyond Egypt and across the Roman world.^[124] In the mixture of traditions in late Roman religion, Thoth was transmuted into the legendary esoteric teacher Hermes Trismegistus,^[196] Isis was venerated from Britain to Mesopotamia,^[197] and Roman emperors, like Ptolemaic kings before them, invoked her and her husband Serapis to endorse their authority.^[198]



Jupiter Ammon, a combination of Amun with the Roman god Jupiter

Temples and cults in Egypt itself began to decline as the Roman economy deteriorated in the third century AD, and beginning in the fourth century, Christians suppressed all veneration of Egyptian deities.^[199] The last formal cults, at Philae, died out in the fifth or sixth century.^{[200][201]} Most beliefs surrounding the gods themselves disappeared within a few hundred years, remaining in magical texts into the seventh and eighth centuries. But many of the practices involved in their worship, such as processions and oracles, were adapted to fit Christian ideology and persisted as part of the Coptic Church.^[199] Given the great changes and diverse influences in Egyptian culture since that time, scholars disagree about whether any modern Coptic practices are descended from those of pharaonic religion. But many festivals and other traditions in Egypt, both Christian and Muslim, resemble the worship of Egypt's ancient gods.^[202]

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Notes

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External links

- Gods and goddesses in ancient Egyptian belief (<http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/religion/deitiesindex.html>) at Digital Egypt for Universities

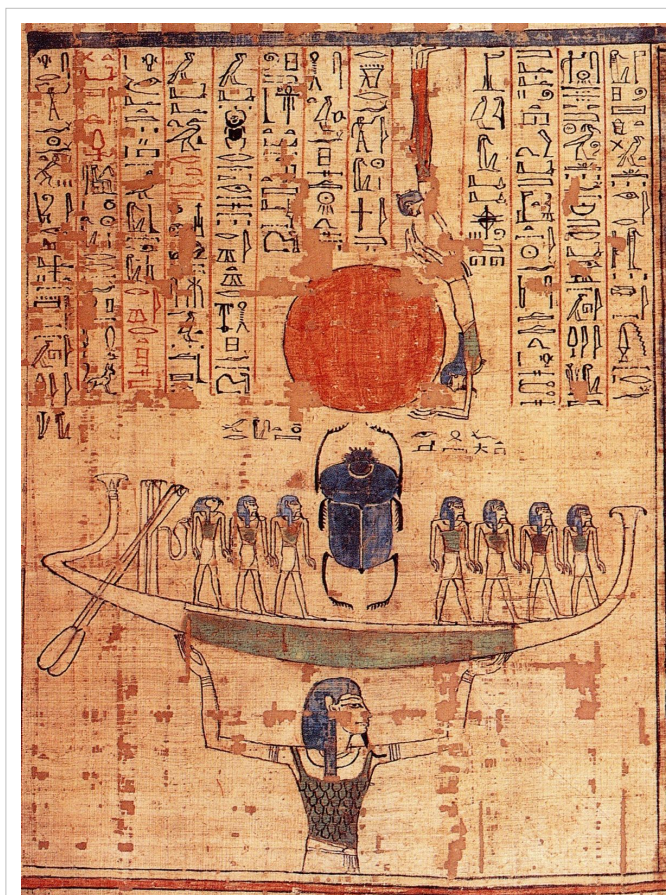
Egyptian mythology

Egyptian mythology is the collection of myths from ancient Egypt, which describe the actions of the Egyptian gods as a means of understanding the world. The beliefs that these myths express are an important part of ancient Egyptian religion. Myths appear frequently in Egyptian writings and art, particularly in short stories and in religious material such as hymns, ritual texts, funerary texts, and temple decoration. These sources rarely contain a complete account of a myth and often describe only brief fragments.

Inspired by the cycles of nature, the Egyptians saw time in the present as a series of recurring patterns, whereas the earliest periods of time were linear. Myths are set in these earliest times, and myth sets the pattern for the cycles of the present. Present events repeat the events of myth, and in doing so renew *maat*, the fundamental order of the universe. Amongst the most important episodes from the mythic past are the creation myths, in which the gods form the universe out of primordial chaos; the stories of the reign of the sun god Ra upon the earth; and the Osiris myth, concerning the struggles of the gods Osiris, Isis, and Horus against the disruptive god Set. Events from the present that might be regarded as myths include Ra's daily journey through the world and its otherworldly counterpart, the Duat. Recurring themes in these mythic episodes include the conflict between the upholders of *maat* and the forces of disorder, the importance of the pharaoh in maintaining *maat*, and the continual death and regeneration of the gods.

The details of these sacred events differ greatly from one text to another and often seem contradictory. Egyptian myths are primarily metaphorical, translating the essence and behavior of deities into terms that humans can understand. Each variant of a myth represents a different symbolic perspective, enriching the Egyptians' understanding of the gods and the world.

Mythology profoundly influenced Egyptian culture. It inspired or influenced many religious rituals and provided the ideological basis for kingship. Scenes and symbols from myth appeared in art in tombs, temples, and amulets. In literature, myths or elements of them were used in stories that range from humor to allegory, demonstrating that the Egyptians adapted mythology to serve a wide variety of purposes.



Nun, the embodiment of the primordial waters, lifts the barque of the sun god Ra into the sky at the moment of creation.

Origins

The development of Egyptian myth is difficult to trace. Egyptologists must make educated guesses about its earliest phases, based on written sources that appeared much later.^[1] One obvious influence on myth is the Egyptians' natural surroundings. Each day the sun rose and set, bringing light to the land and regulating human activity; each year the Nile flooded, renewing the fertility of the soil and allowing the highly productive farming that sustained Egyptian civilization. Thus the Egyptians saw water and the sun as symbols of life and thought of time as a series of natural cycles. This orderly pattern was at constant risk of disruption: unusually low floods resulted in famine, and high floods destroyed crops and buildings.^[2] The hospitable Nile valley was surrounded by harsh desert, populated by peoples the Egyptians regarded as uncivilized enemies of order.^[3] For these reasons, the Egyptians saw their land as an isolated place of stability, or *maat*, surrounded and endangered by chaos. These themes—order, chaos, and renewal—appear repeatedly in Egyptian religious thought.^[4]

Another possible source for mythology is ritual. Many rituals make reference to myths and are sometimes based directly on them.^[5] But it is difficult to determine whether a culture's myths developed before rituals or vice versa.^[6] Questions about this relationship between myth and ritual have spawned much discussion among Egyptologists and scholars of comparative religion in general. In ancient Egypt, the earliest evidence of religious practices predates written myths.^[5] Rituals early in Egyptian history included only a few motifs from myth. For these reasons, some scholars have argued that, in Egypt, rituals emerged before myths.^[6] But because the early evidence is so sparse, the question may never be resolved for certain.^[5]

In private rituals, which are often called "magical", the myth and the ritual are particularly closely tied. Many of the myth-like stories that appear in the rituals' texts are not found in other sources. Even the widespread motif of the goddess Isis rescuing her poisoned son Horus appears only in this type of text. The Egyptologist David Frankfurter argues that these rituals adapt basic mythic traditions to fit the specific ritual, creating elaborate new stories based on myth.^[7] In contrast, J. F. Borghouts says of magical texts that there is "not a shred of evidence that a specific kind of 'unorthodox' mythology was coined... for this genre."^[8]

Much of Egyptian mythology consists of origin myths, explaining the beginnings of various elements of the world, including human institutions and natural phenomena. Kingship arises among the gods at the beginning of time and later passed to the human pharaohs; warfare originates when humans begin fighting each other after the sun god's withdrawal into the sky.^[9] Myths also describe the supposed beginnings of less fundamental traditions. In a minor mythic episode, Horus becomes angry with his mother Isis and cuts off her head. Isis replaces her lost head with that of a cow. This event explains why Isis was sometimes depicted with the horns of a cow as part of her headdress.^[10]

Some myths may have been inspired by historical events. The unification of Egypt under the pharaohs, at the end of the Predynastic Period around 3100 BC, made the king the focus of Egyptian religion, and thus the ideology of kingship became an important part of mythology.^[11] In the wake of unification, gods that were once local patron deities gained national importance, forming new relationships that linked the local deities into a unified national tradition. Geraldine Pinch suggests that early myths may have formed from these relationships.^[12] Egyptian sources link the mythical strife between the gods Horus and Set with a conflict between the regions of Upper and Lower Egypt, which may have happened in the late Predynastic era or in the Early Dynastic Period.^{[13][14]}

After these early times, most changes to mythology developed and adapted preexisting concepts rather than creating new ones, although there were exceptions.^[15] Many scholars have suggested that the myth of the sun god withdrawing into the sky, leaving humans to fight among themselves, was inspired by the breakdown of royal authority and national unity at the end of the Old Kingdom (c. 2686 BC – 2181 BC).^[16] In the New Kingdom (c. 1550–1070 BC), minor myths developed around deities like Yam and Anat who had been adopted from Canaanite religion. In contrast, during the Greek and Roman eras (332 BC–641 AD), Greco-Roman culture had little influence on Egyptian mythology.^[17]

Definition and scope

Scholars have difficulty defining which ancient Egyptian beliefs are myth. The basic definition of myth suggested by the Egyptologist John Baines is "a sacred or culturally central narrative". In Egypt, the narratives that are central to culture and religion are almost entirely about events among the gods.^[18] Actual narratives about the gods' actions are rare in Egyptian texts, particularly from early periods, and most references to such events are mere mentions or allusions. Some Egyptologists, like Baines, argue that narratives complete enough to be called "myths" existed in all periods, but that Egyptian tradition did not favor writing them down. Others, like Jan Assmann, have said that true myths were rare in Egypt and may only have emerged partway through its history, developing out of the fragments of narration that appear in the earliest writings.^[19] Recently, however, Vincent Arieh Tobin^[20] and Susanne Bickel have suggested that lengthy narration was not needed in Egyptian mythology because of its complex and flexible nature.^[21] Tobin argues that narrative is even alien to myth, because narratives tend to form a simple and fixed perspective on the events they describe. If narration is not needed for myth, any statement that conveys an idea about the nature or actions of a god can be called "mythic".^[20]

Content and meaning

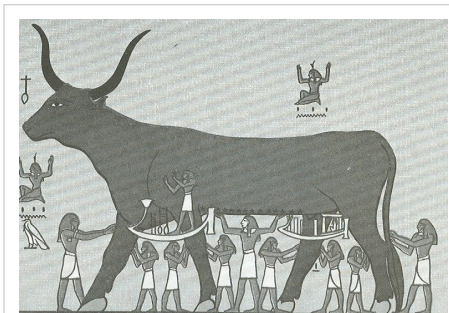
Like myths in many other cultures, Egyptian myths serve to justify human traditions and to address fundamental questions about the world,^[22] such as the nature of disorder and the ultimate fate of the universe.^[15] The Egyptians explained these profound issues through statements about the gods.^[21]

Egyptian deities represent natural phenomena, from physical objects like the earth or the sun to abstract forces like knowledge and creativity. The actions and interactions of the gods, the Egyptians believed, govern the behavior of all of these forces and elements.^[23] For the most part, the Egyptians did not describe these mysterious processes in explicit theological writings. Instead, the relationships and interactions of the gods illustrated such processes implicitly.^[24]

Most of Egypt's gods, including many of the major ones, do not have significant roles in mythic narratives,^[25] although their nature and relationships with other deities are often established in lists or bare statements without narration.^[26] For the gods who are deeply involved in narratives, mythic events are very important expressions of their roles in the cosmos. Therefore, if only narratives are myths, mythology is a major element in Egyptian religious understanding, but not as essential as it is in many other cultures.^[27]

The true realm of the gods is mysterious and inaccessible to humans. Mythological stories use symbolism to make the events in this realm comprehensible.^[29] Not every detail of a mythic account has symbolic significance. Some images and incidents, even in religious texts, are meant simply as visual or dramatic embellishments of broader, more meaningful myths.^{[30][31]}

Few complete stories appear in Egyptian mythological sources. These sources often contain nothing more than allusions to the events to which they relate, and texts that contain actual narratives tell only portions of a larger story. Thus, for any given myth the Egyptians may have had only the general outlines of a story, from which fragments describing particular incidents were drawn.^[25] Moreover, the gods are not well-defined characters, and the motivations for their sometimes inconsistent actions are rarely given.^[32] Egyptian myths are not, therefore, fully developed tales. Their importance lay in their underlying meaning, not their characteristics as stories. Instead of coalescing into lengthy, fixed narratives, they remained highly flexible and non-dogmatic.^[29]



The sky depicted as a cow goddess supported by other deities. This image combines several coexisting visions of the sky: as a roof, as the surface of a sea, as a cow, and as a goddess in human form.^[28]

So flexible were Egyptian myths that they could seemingly conflict with each other. Many descriptions of the creation of the world and the movements of the sun occur in Egyptian texts, some very different from each other.^[33] The relationships between gods were fluid, so that, for instance, the goddess Hathor could be called the mother, wife, or daughter of the sun god Ra.^[34] Separate deities could even be syncretized, or linked, as a single being. Thus the creator god Atum was combined with Ra to form Ra-Atum.^[35]

One commonly suggested reason for inconsistencies in myth is that religious ideas differed over time and in different regions.^[36] The local cults of various deities developed theologies centered on their own patron gods.^[37] As the influence of different cults shifted, some mythological systems attained national dominance. In the Old Kingdom (c. 2686–2181 BC) the most important of these systems was the cults of Ra and Atum, centered at Heliopolis. They formed a mythical family, the Ennead, that was said to have created the world. It included the most important deities of the time but gave primacy to Atum and Ra.^[38] The Egyptians also overlaid old religious ideas with new ones. For instance, the god Ptah, whose cult was centered at Memphis, was also said to be the creator of the world. Ptah's creation myth incorporates older myths by saying that it is the Ennead who carry out Ptah's creative commands.^[39] Thus, the myth makes Ptah older and greater than the Ennead. Many scholars have seen this myth as a political attempt to assert the superiority of Memphis' god over those of Heliopolis.^[40] By combining concepts in this way, the Egyptians produced an immensely complicated set of deities and myths.^[41]

Egyptologists in the early twentieth century thought that politically motivated changes like these were the principal reason for the contradictory imagery in Egyptian myth. However, in the 1940s, Henri Frankfort, realizing the symbolic nature of Egyptian mythology, argued that apparently contradictory ideas are part of the "multiplicity of approaches" that the Egyptians used to understand the divine realm. Frankfort's arguments are the basis for much of the more recent analysis of Egyptian beliefs.^[42] Political changes affected Egyptian beliefs, but the ideas that emerged through those changes also have deeper meaning. Multiple versions of the same myth express different aspects of the same phenomenon; different gods that behave in a similar way reflect the close connections between natural forces. The varying symbols of Egyptian mythology express ideas too complex to be seen through a single lens.^[29]

Sources

The sources that are available range from solemn hymns to entertaining stories. Without a single, canonical version of any myth, the Egyptians adapted the broad traditions of myth to fit the varied purposes of their writings.^[43] Most Egyptians were illiterate and may therefore have had an elaborate oral tradition that transmitted myths through spoken storytelling. Susanne Bickel suggests that the existence of this tradition helps explain why many texts related to myth give little detail: the myths were already known to every Egyptian.^[44] Very little evidence of this oral tradition has survived, and modern knowledge of Egyptian myths is drawn from written and pictorial sources. Only a small proportion of these sources has survived to the present, so much of the mythological information that was once written down has been lost.^[26] This information is not equally abundant in all periods, so the beliefs that Egyptians held in some eras of their history are more poorly understood than the beliefs in better documented times.^[45]

Religious sources

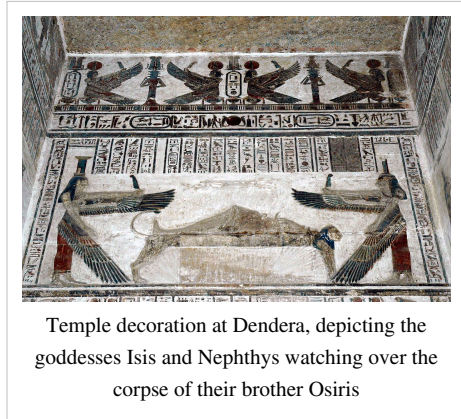
Many gods appear in artwork from the Early Dynastic Period of Egypt's history (c. 3100–2686 BC), but little about the gods' actions can be gleaned from these sources because they include minimal writing. The Egyptians began using writing more extensively in the Old Kingdom, in which appeared the first major source of Egyptian mythology: the *Pyramid Texts*. These texts are a collection of several hundred incantations inscribed in the interiors of pyramids beginning in the 24th century BC. They were the first Egyptian funerary texts, intended to ensure that the kings buried in the pyramid would pass safely through the afterlife. Many of the incantations allude to myths related to the afterlife, including creation myths and the myth of Osiris. Many of the texts are likely much older than their first known written copies, and they therefore provide clues about the early stages of Egyptian religious

belief.^[46]

During the First Intermediate Period (c. 2181–2055 BC), the *Pyramid Texts* developed into the *Coffin Texts*, which contain similar material and were available to non-royals. Succeeding funerary texts, like the *Book of the Dead* in the New Kingdom and the *Books of Breathing* from the Late Period (664–323 BC) and after, developed out of these earlier collections. The New Kingdom also saw the development of another type of funerary text, containing detailed and cohesive descriptions of the nocturnal journey of the sun god. Texts of this type include the *Amduat*, the *Book of Gates*, and the *Book of Caverns*.^[43]

Temples, whose surviving remains date mostly from the New Kingdom and later, are another important source of myth. Many temples had a *per-ankh*, or temple library, storing papyri for rituals and other uses. Some of these papyri contain hymns, which, in praising a god for its actions, often refer to the myths that define those actions. Other temple papyri describe rituals, many of which are based partly on myth.^[47] Scattered remnants of these papyrus collections have survived to the present. It is possible that the collections included more systematic records of myths, but no evidence of such texts has survived.^[26] Mythological texts and illustrations, similar to those on temple papyri, also appear in the decoration of the temple buildings.

The elaborately decorated and well preserved temples of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods (305 BC–AD 380) are an especially rich source of myth.^[48]



Temple decoration at Dendera, depicting the goddesses Isis and Nephthys watching over the corpse of their brother Osiris

The Egyptians also performed rituals for personal goals such as protection from or healing of illness. These rituals are often called "magical" rather than religious, but they were believed to work on the same principles as temple ceremonies, evoking mythical events as the basis for the ritual.^[49]

Information from religious sources is limited by a system of traditional restrictions on what they could describe and depict. The murder of the god Osiris, for instance, is never explicitly described in Egyptian writings.^[26] The Egyptians believed that words and images could affect reality, so they avoided the risk of making such negative events real.^[50] The conventions of Egyptian art were also poorly suited for portraying whole narratives, so most myth-related artwork consists of sparse individual scenes.^[26]

Other sources

References to myth also appear in non-religious Egyptian literature, beginning in the Middle Kingdom. Many of these references are mere allusions to mythic motifs, but several stories are based entirely on mythic narratives. These more direct renderings of myth are particularly common in the Late and Greco-Roman periods when, according to scholars such as Heike Sternberg, Egyptian myths reached their most fully developed state.^[51]

The attitudes toward myth in nonreligious Egyptian texts vary greatly. Some stories resemble the narratives from magical texts, while others are more clearly meant as entertainment and even contain humorous episodes.^[51]

A final source of Egyptian myth is the writings of Greek and Roman writers like Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, who described Egyptian religion in the last centuries of its existence. Prominent among these writers is Plutarch, whose work *De Iside et Osiride* contains, among other things, the longest ancient account of the myth of Osiris.^[52] These authors' knowledge of Egyptian religion was limited because they were excluded from many religious practices, and their statements about Egyptian beliefs are affected by their biases about Egypt's culture.^[26]

Cosmology

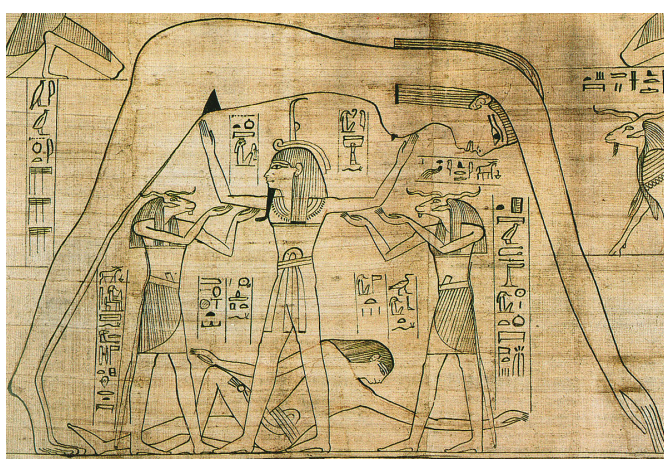
Maat

The Egyptian word *maat* refers to the fundamental order of the universe in Egyptian belief. Established at the creation of the world, *maat* distinguishes the world from the chaos that preceded and surrounds it. *Maat* encompasses both the proper behavior of humans and the normal functioning of the forces of nature, both of which make life and happiness possible. Because the actions of the gods govern natural forces and myths express those actions, Egyptian mythology represents the proper functioning of the world and the sustenance of life itself.^[53]

To the Egyptians, the most important human maintainer of *maat* is the pharaoh. In myth the pharaoh is the son of a variety of deities. As such, he is their designated representative, obligated to maintain order in human society just as they do in nature, and to continue the rituals that sustain them and their activities.^[54]

Shape of the world

In Egyptian belief, the disorder that predates the ordered world exists beyond the world as an infinite expanse of formless water, personified by the god Nun. The earth, personified by the god Geb, is a flat piece of land over which arches the sky, usually represented by the goddess Nut. The two are separated by the personification of air, Shu. The sun god Ra is said to travel through the sky, across the body of Nut, enlivening the world with his light. At night Ra passes beyond the western horizon into the Duat, a mysterious region that borders the formlessness of Nun. At dawn he emerges from the Duat in the eastern horizon.^[55]



The air god Shu, assisted by other gods, holds up Nut, the sky, as Geb, the earth, lies beneath.

The nature of the sky and the location of the Duat are uncertain. Egyptian texts variously describe the nighttime sun as traveling beneath the earth and within the body of Nut. The Egyptologist James P. Allen believes that these explanations of the sun's movements are dissimilar but coexisting ideas. In Allen's view, Nut represents the visible surface of the waters of Nun, with the stars floating on this surface. The sun, therefore, sails across the water in a circle, each night passing beyond the horizon to reach the skies that arch beneath the inverted land of the Duat.^[56] Leonard H. Lesko, however, believes that the Egyptians saw the sky as a solid canopy and described the sun as traveling through the Duat above the surface of the sky, from west to east, during the night.^[57] Joanne Conman, modifying Lesko's model, argues that this solid sky is a moving, concave dome overarching a deeply convex earth. The sun and the stars move along with this dome, and their passage below the horizon is simply their movement over areas of the earth that the Egyptians could not see. These regions would then be the Duat.^[58]

The fertile lands of the Nile Valley (Upper Egypt) and Delta (Lower Egypt) lie at the center of the world in Egyptian cosmology. Outside them are the infertile deserts, which are associated with the chaos that lies beyond the world.^[59] Somewhere beyond them is the horizon, the *akhet*. There, two mountains, in the east and the west, mark the places where the sun enters and exits the Duat.^[60]

Foreign nations are associated with the hostile deserts in Egyptian ideology. Foreign people, likewise, are generally lumped in with the "nine bows", people who threaten pharaonic rule and the stability of *maat*, although peoples allied with or subject to Egypt may be viewed more positively.^[61] For these reasons, events in Egyptian mythology rarely take place in foreign lands. While some stories pertain to the sky or the Duat, Egypt itself is usually the scene

for the actions of the gods. Often, even the myths set in Egypt seem to take place on a plane of existence separate from that inhabited by living humans, although in other stories, humans and gods interact. In either case, the Egyptian gods are deeply tied to their home land.^[59]

Time

The Egyptians' vision of time was influenced by their environment. Each day the sun rose and set, bringing light to the land and regulating human activity; each year the Nile flooded, renewing the fertility of the soil and allowing the highly productive agriculture that sustained Egyptian civilization. These periodic events inspired the Egyptians to see all of time as a series of recurring patterns regulated by *maat*, renewing the gods and the universe.^[62] Although the Egyptians recognized that different historical eras differ in their particulars, mythic patterns dominate the Egyptian perception of history.^[63]

Many Egyptian stories about the gods are characterized as having taken place in a primeval time when the gods were manifest on the earth and ruled over it. After this time, the Egyptians believed, authority on earth passed to human pharaohs.^[64] This primeval era seems to predate the start of the sun's journey and the recurring patterns of the present world. At the other end of time is the end of the cycles and the dissolution of the world. Because these distant periods lend themselves to linear narrative better than the cycles of the present, John Baines sees them as the only periods in which true myths take place.^[65] Yet, to some extent, the cyclical aspect of time was present in the mythic past as well. Egyptians saw even stories that were set in that time as being perpetually true. The myths were made real every time the events to which they were related occurred. These events were celebrated with rituals, which often evoked myths.^[66] Ritual allowed time to periodically return to the mythic past and renew life in the universe.^[67]

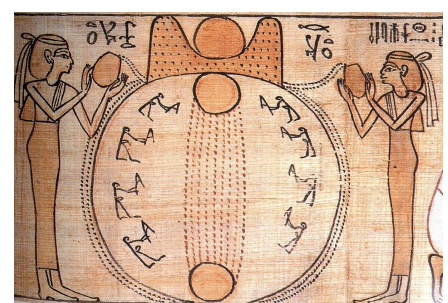
Major myths

Some of the most important categories of myths are described below. Because of the fragmentary nature of Egyptian myths, there is little indication in Egyptian sources of a chronological sequence of mythical events.^[68] Nevertheless, the categories are arranged in a very loose chronological order.

Creation

Among the most important myths were those describing the creation of the world. The Egyptian developed many accounts of the creation, which differ greatly in the events they describe. In particular, the deities credited with creating the world vary in each account. This difference partly reflects the desire of Egypt's cities and priesthoods to exalt their own patron gods by attributing creation to them. Yet the differing accounts were not regarded as contradictory; instead, the Egyptians saw the creation process as having many aspects and involving many divine forces.^[69]

One common feature of the myths is the emergence of the world from the waters of chaos that surround it. This event represents the establishment of *maat* and the origin of life. One fragmentary tradition centers on the eight gods of the Ogdoad, who represent the characteristics of the primeval water itself. Their actions give rise to the sun (represented in creation myths by various gods, especially Ra), whose birth forms a space of light and dryness within the dark water.^[70] The sun rises from the first mound of dry land, another common motif in the creation myths, which was likely inspired by the sight of mounds of earth emerging as the Nile flood receded. With the



The sun rises over the circular mound of creation as goddesses pour out the primeval waters around it

emergence of the sun god, the establisher of *maat*, the world has its first ruler.^[71] Accounts from the first millennium BC focus on the actions of the creator god in subduing the forces of chaos that threaten the newly ordered world.^[72]

Atum, a god closely connected with the sun and the primeval mound, is the focus of a creation myth dating back at least to the Old Kingdom. Atum, who incorporates all the elements of the world, exists within the waters as a potential being. At the time of creation he emerges to produce other gods, resulting in a set of nine deities, the Ennead, which includes Geb, Nut, and other key elements of the world. The Ennead can by extension stand for all the gods, so its creation represents the differentiation of Atum's unified potential being into the multiplicity of elements present within the world.^[73]

Over time, the Egyptians developed more abstract perspectives on the creation process. By the time of the *Coffin Texts*, they described the formation of the world as the realization of a concept first developed within the mind of the creator god. The force of *heka*, or magic, which links things in the divine realm and things in the physical world, is the power that links the creator's original concept with its physical realization. *Heka* itself can be personified as a god, but this intellectual process of creation is not associated with that god alone. An inscription from the Third Intermediate Period (c. 1070–664 BC), whose text may be much older, describes the process in detail and attributes it to the god Ptah, whose close association with craftsmen makes him a suitable deity to give a physical form to the original creative vision. Hymns from the New Kingdom describe the god Amun, a mysterious power that lies behind even the other gods, as the ultimate source of this creative vision.^[74]

The origin of humans is not a major feature of Egyptian creation stories. In some texts the first humans spring from tears that Ra-Atum or his feminine aspect, the Eye of Ra, sheds in a moment of weakness and distress, foreshadowing humans' flawed nature and sorrowful lives. Others say humans are molded from clay by the god Khnum. But overall, the focus of the creation myths is the establishment of cosmic order rather than the special place of humans within it.^[75]

The reign of the sun god

In the period of the mythic past after the creation, Ra dwells on earth as king of the gods and of humans. This period is the closest thing to a golden age in Egyptian tradition, the period of stability that the Egyptians constantly sought to evoke and imitate. Yet the stories about Ra's reign focus on conflicts between him and forces that disrupt his rule, reflecting the king's role in Egyptian ideology as enforcer of *maat*.^[76]

In an episode known in different versions from temple texts, some of the gods defy Ra's authority, and he destroys them with the help and advice of other gods like Thoth and Horus the Elder.^{[77][78]} At one point he faces dissent even from an extension of himself, the Eye of Ra, which can act independently of him in the form of a goddess. The Eye goddess becomes angry with Ra and runs away from him, wandering wild and dangerous in the lands outside Egypt. Weakened by her absence, Ra sends one of the other gods—Shu, Thoth, or Anhur, in different accounts—to retrieve her, by force or persuasion. Because the Eye of Ra is associated with the star Sothis, whose heliacal rising signaled the start of the Nile flood, the return of the Eye goddess to Egypt coincides with the life-giving inundation. Upon her return, the goddess becomes the consort of Ra or of the god who has retrieved her. Her pacification restores order and renews life.^[79]

As Ra grows older and weaker, humanity, too, turns against him. In an episode often called "The Destruction of Mankind", related in *The Book of the Heavenly Cow*, Ra discovers that humanity is plotting rebellion against him and sends his Eye to punish them. She slays many people, but Ra apparently decides that he does not want her to destroy all of humanity. He has beer dyed red to resemble blood and spreads it over the field. The Eye goddess drinks the beer, becomes drunk, and ceases her rampage. Ra then withdraws into the sky, weary of ruling on earth, and begins his daily journey through the heavens and the Duat. The surviving humans are dismayed, and they attack the people among them who plotted against Ra. This event is the origin of warfare, death, and humans' constant struggle to protect *maat* from the destructive actions of other people.^[80]

In *The Book of the Heavenly Cow*, the results of the destruction of mankind seem to mark the end of the direct reign of the gods and of the linear time of myth. The beginning of Ra's journey is the beginning of the cyclical time of the present.^[65] Yet in other sources, mythic time continues after this change. Egyptian accounts give sequences of divine rulers who take the place of the sun god as king on earth, each reigning for many thousands of years.^[81] Although accounts differ as to which gods reigned and in what order, the succession from Ra-Atum to his descendants Shu and Geb—in which the kingship passes to the male in each generation of the Ennead—is common. Both of them face revolts that parallel those in the reign of the sun god, but the revolt that receives the most attention in Egyptian sources is the one in the reign of Geb's heir Osiris.^[82]

Osiris myth

The collection of episodes surrounding Osiris' death and succession is the most elaborate of all Egyptian myths, and it had the most widespread influence in Egyptian culture.^[83] In the first portion of the myth, Osiris, who is associated with both fertility and kingship, is killed and his position usurped by his brother Set. In some versions of the myth, Osiris is actually dismembered and the pieces of his corpse scattered across Egypt. Osiris' sister and wife, Isis, finds her husband's body and restores it to wholeness.^[84] She is assisted by funerary deities such as Nephthys and Anubis, and the process of Osiris' restoration reflects Egyptian traditions of embalming and burial. Isis then briefly revives Osiris to conceive an heir with him: the god Horus.^[85]

The next portion of the myth concerns Horus' birth and childhood. Isis gives birth to and raises her son in secluded places, hidden from the menace of Set. The episodes in this phase of the myth concern Isis' efforts to protect her son from Set or other hostile beings, or to heal him from sickness or injury. In these episodes Isis is the epitome of maternal devotion and a powerful practitioner of healing magic.^[86]

In the third phase of the story, Horus competes with Set for the kingship. Their struggle encompasses a great number of separate episodes and ranges in character from violent conflict to a legal judgment by the assembled gods.^[87] In one important episode, Set tears out one or both of Horus' eyes, which are later restored by the healing efforts of Thoth or Hathor. For this reason, the Eye of Horus is a prominent symbol of life and well-being in Egyptian iconography. Because Horus is a sky god, with one eye equated with the sun and the other with the moon, the destruction and restoration of the single eye explains why the moon is less bright than the sun.^[88]



Statues of Osiris and of Isis nursing the infant Horus

Texts present two different resolutions for the divine contest: one in which Egypt is divided between the two claimants, and another in which Horus becomes sole ruler. In the latter version, the ascension of Horus, Osiris' rightful heir, symbolizes the reestablishment of *maat* after the unrighteous rule of Set. With order restored, Horus can perform the funerary rites for his father that are his duty as son and heir. Through this service Osiris is given new life in the Duat, whose ruler he becomes. The relationship between Osiris as king of the dead and Horus as king of the living stands for the relationship between every king and his deceased predecessors. Osiris, meanwhile, represents the regeneration of life. On earth he is credited with the annual growth of crops, and in the Duat he is involved in the rebirth of the sun and of deceased human souls.^[89]

Although Horus to some extent represents any living pharaoh, he is not the end of the lineage of ruling gods. He is succeeded first by gods and then by spirits that represent dim memories of Egypt's Predynastic rulers, the souls of Nekhen and Pe. They link the entirely mythical rulers to the final part of the sequence, the lineage of Egypt's historical kings.^[64]

Birth of the royal child

Several disparate Egyptian texts address a similar theme: the birth of a divinely fathered child who is heir to the kingship. The earliest known appearance of such a story does not appear to be a myth but an entertaining folktale, found in the Middle Kingdom Westcar Papyrus, about the birth of the first three kings of Egypt's Fifth Dynasty. In that story, the three kings are the offspring of Ra and a human woman. The same theme appears in a firmly religious context in the New Kingdom, when the rulers Hatshepsut, Amenhotep III, and Ramesses II depicted in temple reliefs their own conception and birth, in which the god Amun is the father and the historical queen the mother. By stating that the king originated among the gods and was deliberately created by the most important god of the period, the story gives a mythical background to the king's coronation, which appears alongside the birth story. The divine connection legitimizes the king's rule and provides a rationale for his role as intercessor between gods and humans.^[90]

Similar scenes appear in many post-New Kingdom temples, but this time the events they depict involve the gods alone. In this period, most temples were dedicated to a mythical family of deities, usually a father, mother, and son. In these versions of the story, the birth is that of the son in each triad.^[91] Each of these child gods is the heir to the throne, who will restore stability to the country. This shift in focus from the human king to the gods who are associated with him reflects a decline in the status of the pharaoh in the late stages of Egyptian history.^[90]

The journey of the sun

Ra's movements through the sky and the Duat are not fully narrated in Egyptian sources,^[92] although funerary texts like the *Amduat*, *Book of Gates*, and *Book of Caverns* relate the nighttime half of the journey in sequences of vignettes.^[93] This journey is key to Ra's nature and to the sustenance of all life.^[31]

In traveling across the sky, Ra brings light to the earth, sustaining all things that live there. He reaches the peak of his strength at noon and then ages and weakens as he moves toward sunset. In the evening, Ra takes the form of Atum, the creator god, oldest of all things in the world. According to early Egyptian texts, at the end of the day he spits out all the other deities, whom he devoured at sunrise. Here they represent the stars, and the story explains why the stars are visible at night and seemingly absent during the day.^[94]

At sunset Ra passes through the *akhet*, the horizon, in the west. At times the horizon is described as a gate or door that leads to the Duat. At others, the sky goddess Nut is said to swallow the sun god, so that his journey through the Duat is likened to a journey through her body.^[95] In funerary texts, the Duat and the deities in it are portrayed in elaborate, detailed, and widely varying imagery. These images are symbolic of the awesome and enigmatic nature of the Duat, where both the gods and the dead are renewed by contact with the original powers of creation. Indeed, although Egyptian texts avoid saying it explicitly, Ra's entry into the Duat is seen as his death.^[96]

Certain themes appear repeatedly in depictions of the journey. Ra overcomes numerous obstacles in his course, representative of the effort necessary to maintain *maat*. The greatest challenge is the opposition of Apep, a serpent god who represents the destructive aspect of disorder, and who threatens to destroy the sun god and plunge creation into chaos.^[97] In many of the texts, Ra overcomes these obstacles with the assistance of other deities who travel with him; they stand for various powers that are necessary to uphold Ra's authority.^[98] In his passage Ra also brings

light to the Duat, enlivening the blessed dead who dwell there. In contrast, his enemies—people who have undermined *maat*—are tormented and thrown into dark pits or lakes of fire.^[99]



Ra (at center) travels through the underworld in his barque, accompanied by other gods

The key event in the journey is the meeting of Ra and Osiris. In the New Kingdom, this event developed into a complex symbol of the Egyptian conception of life and time. Osiris, relegated to the Duat, is like a mummified body within its tomb. Ra, endlessly moving, is like the *ba*, or soul, of a deceased human, which may travel during the day but must return to its body each night. When Ra and Osiris meet, they merge into a single being. Their pairing reflects the Egyptian vision of time as a continuous repeating pattern, with one member (Osiris) being always static and the other (Ra) living in a constant cycle. Once he has united with Osiris' regenerative power, Ra continues on his journey with renewed vitality.^[67] This renewal makes possible Ra's emergence at dawn, which is seen as the rebirth of the sun—expressed by a metaphor in which Nut gives birth to Ra after she has swallowed him—and the repetition of the first sunrise at the moment of creation. At this moment, the rising sun god swallows the stars once more, absorbing their power.^[94] In this revitalized state, Ra is depicted as a child or as the scarab beetle god Khepri, both of which represent rebirth in Egyptian iconography.^[100]

End of the universe

Egyptian texts typically treat the dissolution of the world as a possibility to be avoided, and for that reason they do not often describe it in detail. However, many texts allude to the idea that the world, after countless cycles of renewal, is destined to end. This end is described in a passage in the *Coffin Texts* and a more explicit one in the *Book of the Dead*, in which Atum says that he will one day dissolve the ordered world and return to his primeval, inert state within the waters of chaos. All things other than the creator will cease to exist, except Osiris, who will survive along with him.^[101] Details about this eschatological prospect are left unclear, including the fate of the dead who are associated with Osiris.^[102] Yet with the creator god and the god of renewal together in the waters that gave rise to the orderly world, there is the potential for a new creation to arise in the same manner as the old.^[103]

Influence in Egyptian culture

In religion

Because the Egyptians rarely described theological ideas explicitly, the implicit ideas of mythology formed much of the basis for Egyptian religion. The purpose of Egyptian religion was the maintenance of *maat*, and the concepts that myths express were believed to be essential to *maat*. The rituals of Egyptian religion were meant to make the mythic events, and the concepts they represented, real once more, thereby renewing *maat*.^[66] The rituals were believed to achieve this effect through the force of *heka*, the same connection between the physical and divine realms that enabled the original creation.^[105]

For this reason, Egyptian rituals often included actions that symbolized mythical events.^[66] Temple rites included the destruction of models representing malign gods like Set or Apophis, private magical spells called upon Isis to heal the sick as she did for Horus,^[106] and funerary rites such as the Opening of the Mouth ceremony^[107] and ritual offerings to the dead evoked the myth of Osiris' resurrection.^[108] Yet rituals rarely, if ever, involved dramatic reenactments of myths. There are borderline cases, like a ceremony alluding to the Osiris myth in which two women took on the roles of Isis and Nephthys, but scholars disagree about whether these performances formed sequences of events.^[109] Much of Egyptian ritual was focused on more basic activities like giving offerings to the gods, with mythic themes serving as ideological background rather than as the focus of a rite.^[110] Nevertheless, myth and ritual strongly influenced each other. Myths could inspire rituals, like the ceremony with Isis and Nephthys; and rituals that did not originally have a mythic meaning could be reinterpreted as having one, as in the case of offering ceremonies, in which food and other items given to the gods or the dead were equated with the Eye of Horus.^[111]

Kingship was a key element of Egyptian religion, through the king's role as link between humanity and the gods. Myths explain the background for this connection between royalty and divinity. The myths about the Ennead establish the king as heir to the lineage of rulers reaching back to the creator; the myth of divine birth states that the king is the son and heir of a god; and the myths about Osiris and Horus emphasize that rightful succession to the throne is essential to the maintenance of *maat*. Thus, mythology provided the rationale for the very nature of Egyptian government.^[112]

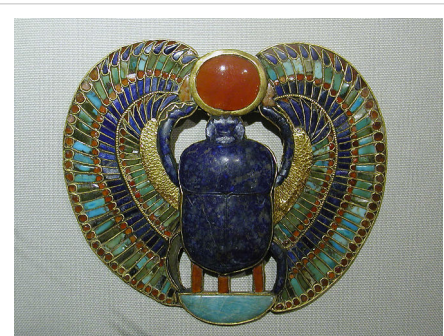
In art

Illustrations of gods and mythical events appear extensively alongside religious writing in tombs, temples, and funerary texts.^[43] Mythological scenes in Egyptian artwork are rarely placed in sequence as a narrative, but individual scenes, particularly depicting the resurrection of Osiris, do sometimes appear in religious artwork.^[113]

Allusions to myth were very widespread in Egyptian art and architecture. In temple design, the central path of the temple axis was likened to the sun god's path across the sky, and the sanctuary at the end of the path represented the place of creation from which he rose.



Set and Horus support the pharaoh. The reconciled rival gods often stand for the unity of Egypt under the rule of its king.^[104]



Funerary amulet in the shape of a scarab

Temple decoration was filled with solar emblems that underscored this relationship. Similarly, the corridors of tombs were linked with the god's journey through the Duat, and the burial chamber with the tomb of Osiris.^[114] The pyramid, the best-known of all Egyptian architectural forms, may have been inspired by mythic symbolism, for it represented the mound of creation and the original sunrise, appropriate for a monument intended to assure the owner's rebirth after death.^[115] Symbols in Egyptian tradition were frequently reinterpreted, so that the meanings of mythical symbols could change and multiply over time like the myths themselves.^[116]

More ordinary works of art were also designed to evoke mythic themes, like the amulets that Egyptians commonly wore to invoke divine powers. The Eye of Horus, for instance, was a very common shape for protective amulets because it represented Horus' well-being after the restoration of his lost eye.^[117] Scarab-shaped amulets symbolized the regeneration of life, referring to the god Khepri, the form that the sun god was said to take at dawn.^[118]

In literature

Themes and motifs from mythology appear frequently in Egyptian literature, even outside of religious writings. An early instruction text, the "Teaching for King Merykara" from the Middle Kingdom, contains a brief reference to a myth of some kind, possibly the Destruction of Mankind; the earliest known Egyptian short story, "Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor", incorporates ideas about the gods and the eventual dissolution of the world into a story set in the past. Some later stories take much of their plot from mythical events: "Tale of the Two Brothers" adapts parts of the Osiris myth into a fantastic story about ordinary people, and "The Blinding of Truth by Falsehood" transforms the conflict between Horus and Set into an allegory.^[119]

A fragment of a text about the actions of Horus and Set dates to the Middle Kingdom, suggesting that stories about the gods arose in that era. Several texts of this type are known from the New Kingdom, and many more were written in the Late and Greco-Roman periods. Although these texts are more clearly derived from myth than those mentioned above, they still adapt the myths for non-religious purposes. "The Contendings of Horus and Seth", from the New Kingdom, tells the story of the conflict between the two gods, often with a humorous and seemingly irreverent tone. The Roman-era "Myth of the Eye of the Sun" incorporates fables into a framing story taken from myth. The goals of written fiction could also affect the narratives in magical texts, as with the New Kingdom story "Isis, the Rich Woman's Son, and the Fisherman's Wife", which conveys a moral message unconnected to its magical purpose. The variety of ways that these stories treat mythology demonstrates the wide range of purposes that myth could serve in Egyptian culture.^[120]

Notes and citations

Notes

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[3] O'Connor, David, "Egypt's View of 'Others'", in Tait 2003, pp. 155, 178–179

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[9] Assmann 2001, pp. 113, 115, 119–122

[10] Griffiths, J. Gwyn, "Isis", in Redford 2001, vol. II, pp. 188–190

[11] Anthes in Kramer 1961, pp. 33–36

[12] Pinch 2004, pp. 6–7

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[14] Horus and Set, portrayed together, often stand for the pairing of Upper and Lower Egypt, although either god can stand for either region.

Both of them were patrons of cities in both halves of the country. The conflict between the two deities may allude to the presumed conflict that preceded the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt at the start of Egyptian history, or it may be tied to an apparent conflict between worshippers of Horus and Set near the end of the Second Dynasty. Anthes in Kramer 1961, pp. 29–30

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Gods and Goddesses

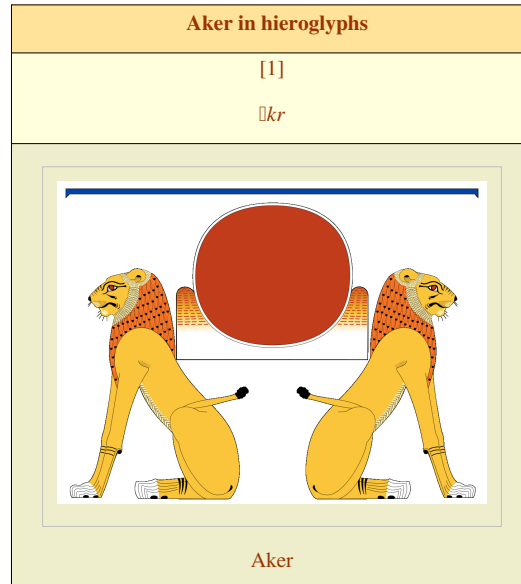
Aken the ferryman

The chief deity in Egyptian mythology, Ra, when considered as a sun god, was thought to traverse the daytime sky in a boat, and cross the underworld at night in another one, named Meseket. As the mythology developed, so did the idea that the boat Meseket was controlled by a separate ferryman, who became known as **Aken**.

In Egyptian mythology, the underworld was composed of the general area, named Duat, and a more pleasant area to which the morally righteous were permitted, named Aaru. At the point in history at which Aken arose, Anubis had become merely the god of embalming, and Osiris, though lord of the whole underworld, dwelt specifically in Aaru. Consequently, Aken was identified as the ruling the area outside of Aaru, Duat in general, on Osiris' behalf.

The Egyptian word for part of the soul *Ba* was also used as a word meaning *ram*, therefore, Aken was usually depicted as being ram-headed. As both an underworld deity, and subservient to Osiris, Aken became known as **Cherti** (also spelt **Kherty**), meaning (*one who is*) *subservient*. The main center of his cult became Letopolis, and it is considered a possibility that his cult caused the development of the myth of the ferryman in other Mediterranean mythologies, such as that of Charon.

Aker (god)



In Egyptian mythology, **Aker** (also spelt **Akar**) was one of the earliest gods worshipped, and was the deification of the horizon. There are strong indications that Aker was worshipped before other known Egyptian gods of the earth, such as Geb.^[citation needed] *Aker* itself means (*one who*) *curves* because it was perceived that the horizon bends all around us. The Pyramid texts make an assertive statement that the **Akeru** (= 'those of the horizon', from the plural of *aker*) will not seize the pharaoh, stressing the power of the Egyptian pharaoh over the surrounding non-Egyptian peoples.

As the horizon, Aker was also seen as symbolic of the borders between each day, and so was originally depicted as a narrow strip of land (i.e. a horizon), with heads on either side, facing away from one another, a symbol of borders.

These heads were usually those of lions. Over time, the heads became full figures of lions (still facing away from each other), one representing the concept of *yesterday* (*Sef* in Egyptian), and the other the concept of *tomorrow* (*Duau* in Egyptian).^[2]

Consequently, Aker often became referred to as *Ruti*, the Egyptian word meaning *two lions*. Between them would often appear the hieroglyph for *horizon*, which was the sun's disc placed between two mountains. Sometimes the lions were depicted as being covered with leopard-like spots, leading some to think it a depiction of the extinct Barbary lion, which, unlike African species, had a spotted coat.

Since the horizon was where night became day, Aker was said to guard the entrance and exit to the underworld, opening them for the sun to pass through during the night. As the guard, it was said that the dead had to request Aker to open the underworld's gates, so that they might enter. Also, as all who had died had to pass Aker, it was said that Aker annulled the causes of death, such as extracting the poison from any snakes that had bitten the deceased, or from any scorpions that had stung them.

As the Egyptians believed that the gates of the morning and evening were guarded by Aker, they sometimes placed twin statues of lions at the doors of their palaces and tombs. This was to guard the households and tombs from evil spirits and other malevolent beings. This practice was adopted by the Greeks and Romans, and is still unknowingly followed by some today. Unlike most of the other Egyptian deities, the worship of Aker remained popular well into the Greco-Roman era. Aker had no temples of his own like the main gods in the Egyptian religion, since he was more connected to the primeval concepts of the very old earth powers.

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Am-heh

Am-heh in hieroglyphs
Am-heh <i>devourer of millions</i>

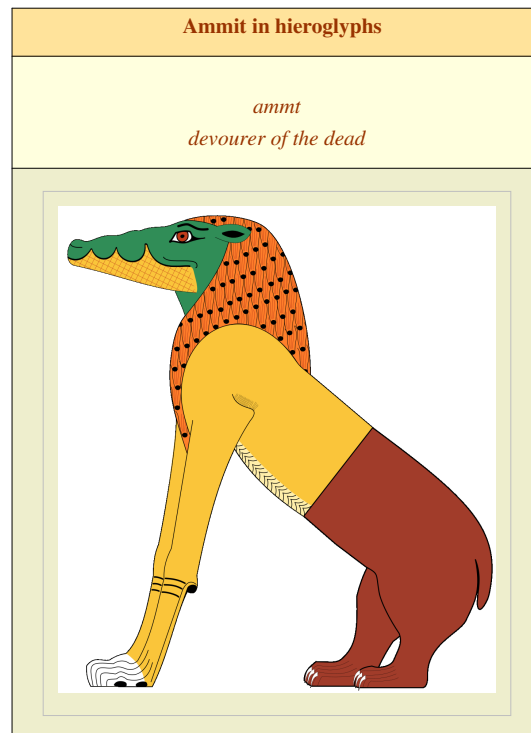
In Egyptian mythology, **Am-heh** was a minor god from the underworld, whose name means "devourer of millions". He was depicted as a man with the head of a dog who lived in a lake of fire. Am-heh could only be controlled by the god Atum.^[1]

He is sometimes confused with Ammit, another underworld creature who ate the hearts of dead who did not pass the scales of Ma'at.^[citation needed]

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Ammit

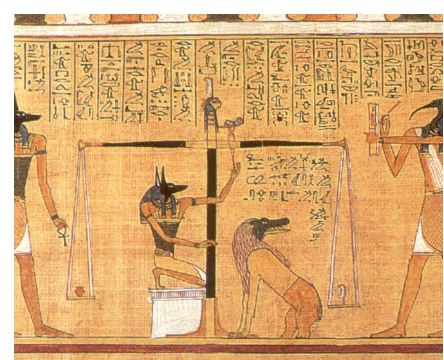


Ammit (/ˈæmɪt/; "devourer" or "soul-eater"; also spelled Ammut or Ahemait) was a female demon in ancient Egyptian religion with a body that was part lion, hippopotamus and crocodile—the three largest "man-eating" animals known to ancient Egyptians. A funerary deity, her titles included "Devourer of the Dead", "Eater of Hearts", and "Great of Death".

Ammit lived near the scales of justice in Duat, the Egyptian underworld. In the Hall of Two Truths, Anubis weighed the heart of a person against the feather of Ma'at, the goddess of truth, which was depicted as an ostrich feather (the feather was often pictured in Ma'at's headdress). If the heart was judged to be not pure, Ammit would devour it, and the person undergoing judgement was not allowed to continue their voyage towards Osiris and immortality. Once Ammit swallowed the heart, the soul was believed to become restless forever; this was called "to die a second time". Ammit was also sometimes said to stand by a lake of fire. In some traditions, the unworthy hearts were cast into the fiery lake to be destroyed. Some scholars believe Ammit and the lake represent the same concept of destruction.

Ammit was not worshipped; instead she embodied all that the Egyptians feared, threatening to bind them to eternal restlessness if they did not follow the principle of Ma'at.

Ammit has been linked [Wikipedia:Avoid weasel words](#) with the goddess Tawaret, who has a similar physical appearance and, as a companion of Bes, also protected others from evil. Other authors [Wikipedia:Avoid weasel words](#) have noted that Ammit's lion characteristics, and the lake of fire, may be pointers to a connection with the goddess Sekhmet. The relation to afterlife punishment and lake of fire location are also shared with the baboon deity



This detail scene from the Papyrus of Hunefer (ca. 1375 B.C.) shows Hunefer's heart being weighed on the scale of Maat against the feather of truth, by the jackal-headed Anubis. The ibis-headed Thoth, scribe of the gods, records the result. If his heart is lighter than the feather, Hunefer is allowed to pass into the afterlife. If not, he is eaten by the waiting **Ammit**. Vignettes such as these were a common illustration in Egyptian books of the dead.^[1]

Babi.

References

 Media related to Ammit at Wikimedia Commons

Amun

Amun	
	
Typical depiction of Amun during the New Kingdom, with two plumes on his head, the ankh symbol and the was sceptre.	
King of the Gods	
Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Thebes
Symbol	two vertical plumes, the ram-headed Sphinx (Criosphinx)
Consort	Amunet
	Wosret
	Mut
Offspring	Khonsu

Amun (also *Amon*, *Amen*, Greek Ἄμμων *Ámmōn*, Ἀμμων *Hámmōn*) was a local deity of Thebes. He was attested since the Old Kingdom together with his spouse Amaunet. With the 11th dynasty (c. 21st century BC), he rose to the position of patron deity of Thebes by replacing Monthu.^[1]

After the rebellion of Thebes against the Hyksos and with the rule of Ahmose I, Amun acquired national importance, expressed in his fusion with the Sun god, Ra, as **Amun-Ra**.

Amun-Ra retained chief importance in the Egyptian pantheon throughout the New Kingdom (with the exception of the "Atenist heresy" under Akhenaten). Amun-Ra in this period (16th to 11th centuries BC) held the position of transcendental, self-created^[2] creator deity "par excellence", he was the champion of the poor or troubled and central to personal piety.^[3] His position as King of Gods developed to the point of virtual monotheism where other gods became manifestations of him. With Osiris, Amun-Ra is the most widely recorded of the Egyptian gods.^[3] As the chief deity of the Egyptian Empire, Amun-Ra also came to be worshipped outside of Egypt, in Ancient Libya and Nubia, and as *Zeus Ammon* came to be identified with Zeus in Ancient Greece.

Early history

Amun and Amaunet are mentioned in the Old Egyptian pyramid texts.^[4] Amun and Amaunet formed one quarter of the ancient Ogdoad of Hermopolis, representing the primordial concept or *element* of air or *invisibility* (corresponding to Shu in the Ennead), hence Amun's later function as a wind deity, and the name *Amun* (written *imn*, pronounced *Amana* in ancient Egyptian^[5]), meaning "hidden".^[6] It was thought that Amun created himself and then his surroundings.^[7]

Amun rose to the position of tutelary deity of Thebes after the end of the First Intermediate Period, under the 11th dynasty. As the patron of Thebes, his spouse was Mut. In Thebes, Amun as father, Mut as mother and the Moon god Khonsu formed a divine family or "Theban Triad".

Temple at Karnak

The history of Amun as the patron god of Thebes begins in the 20th century BC, with the construction of the Precinct of Amun-Re at Karnak under Senusret I. The city of Thebes does not appear to have been of great significance before the 11th dynasty.

Major construction work in the Precinct of Amun-Re took place during the 18th dynasty when Thebes became the capital of the unified Ancient Egypt. Construction of the Hypostyle Hall may have also begun during the 18th dynasty, though most building was undertaken under Seti I and Ramesses II. Merenptah commemorated his victories over the Sea Peoples on the walls of the Cachette Court, the start of the processional route to the Luxor Temple. This *Great Inscription* (which has now lost about a third of its content) shows the king's campaigns and eventual return with booty and prisoners. Next to this inscription is the *Victory Stela*, which is largely a copy of the more famous Israel Stela found in the West Bank funerary complex of Merenptah.^[8] Merenptah's son Seti II added 2 small obelisks in front of the Second Pylon, and a triple bark-shrine to the north of the processional avenue in the same area. This was constructed of sandstone, with a chapel to Amun flanked by those of Mut and Khonsu.

The last major change to the Precinct of Amun-Re's layout was the addition of the first pylon and the massive enclosure walls that surrounded the whole Precinct, both constructed by Nectanebo I.

New Kingdom

Identification with Min and Ra

When the army of the founder of the Eighteenth dynasty expelled the Hyksos rulers from Egypt, the victor's city of origin, Thebes, became the most important city in Egypt, the capital of a new dynasty. The local patron deity of Thebes, Amun, therefore became nationally important. The pharaohs of that new dynasty attributed all their successful enterprises to Amun, and they lavished much of their wealth and captured spoil on the construction of temples dedicated to Amun.

The victory accomplished by pharaohs who worshipped Amun against the "foreign rulers", brought him to be seen as a champion of the less fortunate, upholding the rights of justice for the poor.^[3] By aiding those who traveled in his name, he became the *Protector of the road*. Since he upheld Ma'at (truth, justice, and goodness),^[3] those who prayed to Amun were required first to demonstrate that they were worthy by confessing their sins. Votive stelae from the artisans' village at Deir el-Medina record:

"[Amun] who comes at the voice of the poor in distress, who gives breath to him who is wretched..You are Amun, the Lord of the silent, who comes at the voice of the poor; when I call to you in my distress You come and rescue me...Though the servant was disposed to do evil, the Lord is disposed to forgive. The Lord of Thebes spends not a whole day in anger; His wrath passes in a moment; none remains. His breath comes back to us in mercy..May your ka be kind; may you forgive; It shall not happen again."^[9]



Bas-relief depicting Amun as pharaoh

Subsequently, when Egypt conquered Kush, they identified the chief deity of the Kushites as Amun. This Kush deity was depicted as ram-headed, more specifically a woolly ram with curved horns. Amun thus became associated with the ram arising from the aged appearance of the Kush ram deity. A solar deity in the form of a ram can be traced to the pre-literate Kerma culture in Nubia, contemporary to the Old Kingdom of Egypt. The later (Meroitic period) name of Nubian Amun was *Amani*, attested in numerous personal names such as *Tanwetamani*, *Arkamani*, *Amanitore*, *Amanishakheto*, *Natakamani*. Since rams were considered a symbol of virility, Amun also became thought of as a fertility deity, and so started to absorb the identity of Min, becoming *Amun-Min*. This association with virility led to *Amun-Min* gaining the epithet *Kamutef*, meaning *Bull of his mother*,^[10] in which form he was found depicted on the walls of Karnak, ithyphallic, and with a scourge, as Min was.



Amun-Min as *Amun-Ra ka-Mut-ef* from the temple at Deir el Medina.

As the cult of Amun grew in importance, Amun became identified with the chief deity who was worshipped in other areas during that period, the sun god Ra. This identification led to another merger of identities, with Amun becoming **Amun-Ra**. In the *Hymn to Amun-Ra* he is described as

"Lord of truth, father of the gods, maker of men, creator of all animals, Lord of things that are, creator of the staff of life."^[11]

Atenist heresy

During the latter part of the eighteenth dynasty, the pharaoh Akhenaten (also known as Amenhotep IV) disliked the power of the temple of Amun and advanced the worship of the Aten, a deity whose power was manifested in the sun disk, both literally and symbolically. He defaced the symbols of many of the old deities, and based his religious practices upon the deity, *the Aten*. He moved his capital away from Thebes, but this abrupt change was very unpopular with the priests of Amun, who now found themselves without any of their former power. The religion of Egypt was inexorably tied to the leadership of the country, the pharaoh being the leader of both. The pharaoh was the highest priest in the temple of the capital, and the next lower level of religious leaders were important advisers to the pharaoh, many being administrators of the bureaucracy that ran the country.

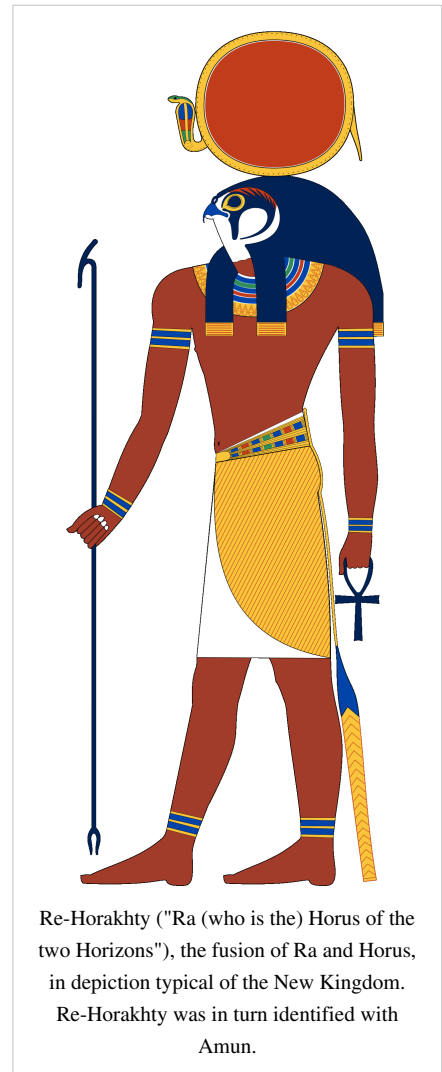
The introduction of Atenism under Akhenaton constructed a "monotheist" worship of Aten in direct competition with that of Amun. Praises of Amun on stelae are strikingly similar in language to those later used, in particular the Hymn to the Aten:

"When thou crossest the sky, all faces behold thee, but when thou departest, thou are hidden from their faces ... When thou settest in the western mountain, then they sleep in the manner of death ... The fashioner of that which the soil produces, ... a mother of profit to gods and men; a patient craftsmen, greatly wearying himself as their maker..valiant herdsman, driving his cattle, their refuge and the making of their living..The sole Lord, who reaches the end of the lands every day, as one who sees them that tread thereon ... Every land chatters at his rising every day, in order to praise him."^[12]

When Akhenaten died, the priests of Amun-Ra reasserted themselves. His name was struck from Egyptian records, all of his religious and governmental changes were undone, and the capital was returned to Thebes. The return to the previous capital and its patron deity was accomplished so swiftly that it seemed this almost monotheistic cult and its governmental reforms had never existed. Worship of Aten ceased and worship of Amun-Ra was restored. The priests of Amun even persuaded his young son, Tutankhaten, whose name meant "the living image of Aten"—and who later would become a pharaoh—to change his name to Tutankhamun, "the living image of Amun".

Theology

In the New Kingdom, Amun became successively identified with all other Egyptian deities, to the point of virtual monotheism (which was then attacked by means of the "counter-monotheism" of Atenism). Primarily, the god of wind *Amun* came to be identified with the solar god Ra and the god of fertility and creation Min, so that Amun-Ra had the main characteristic of a solar god, creator god and fertility god. He also adopted the aspect of the ram from the Nubian solar god, besides numerous other titles and aspects.



Re-Horakhty ("Ra (who is the) Horus of the two Horizons"), the fusion of Ra and Horus, in depiction typical of the New Kingdom. Re-Horakhty was in turn identified with Amun.

As Amun-Re he was petitioned for mercy by those who believed suffering had come about as a result of their own or others wrongdoing.

Amon-Re "who hears the prayer, who comes at the cry of the poor and distressed...Beware of him! Repeat him to son and daughter, to great and small; relate him to generations of generations who have not yet come into being; relate him to fishes in the deep, to birds in heaven; repeat him to him who does not know him and to him who knows him...Though it may be that the servant is normal in doing wrong, yet the Lord is normal in being merciful. The Lord of Thebes does not spend an entire day angry. As for his anger – in the completion of a moment there is no remnant..As thy Ka endures! thou wilt be merciful!"^[13]

In the Leiden hymns, Amun, Ptah, and Re are regarded as a trinity who are distinct gods but with unity in plurality.^[14] "The three gods are one yet the Egyptian elsewhere insists on the separate identity of each of the three."^[15] This unity in plurality is expressed in one text:

"All gods are three: Amun, Re and Ptah, whom none equals. He who hides his name as Amun, he appears to the face as Re, his body is Ptah."^[16]

The hidden aspect of Amun and his likely association with the wind caused Henri Frankfort to draw parallels with a passage from the Gospel of John: "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going." [\[John 3:8 \[17\] \]](#)^[18]

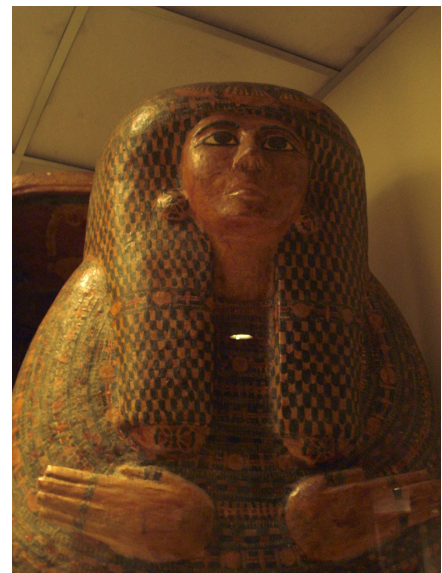
A Leiden hymn to Amun describes how he calms stormy seas for the troubled sailor:

"The tempest moves aside for the sailor who remembers the name of Amon. The storm becomes a sweet breeze for he who invokes His name... Amon is more effective than millions for he who places Him in his heart. Thanks to Him the single man becomes stronger than a crowd."^[19]

Third Intermediate Period

Theban High Priests of Amun

While not regarded as a dynasty, the High Priests of Amun at Thebes were nevertheless of such power and influence that they were effectively the rulers of Upper Egypt from 1080 to c. 943 BC. By the time Herihor was proclaimed as the first ruling High Priest of Amun in 1080 BC—in the 19th Year of Ramesses XI—the Amun priesthood exercised an effective stranglehold on Egypt's economy. The Amun priests owned two-thirds of all the temple lands in Egypt and 90 percent of her ships plus many other resources.^[20] Consequently, the Amun priests were as powerful as Pharaoh, if not more so. One of the sons of the High Priest Pinedjem I would eventually assume the throne and rule Egypt for almost half a decade as pharaoh Psusennes I, while the Theban High Priest Psusennes III would take the throne as king Psusennes II—the final ruler of the 21st Dynasty.



The sarcophagus of a priestess of Amon-Ra, c. 1000 BC – Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History



This Third Intermediate Period amulet from the Walters Art Museum depicts Amun fused with the solar deity, Re, thereby making the supreme solar deity Amun-Re.

Decline

In the 10th century BC, the overwhelming dominance of Amun over all of Egypt gradually began to decline. In Thebes, however, his worship continued unabated, especially under the Nubian Twenty-fifth Dynasty of Egypt, as Amun was by now seen as a national god in Nubia. The Temple of Amun, Jebel Barkal, founded during the New Kingdom, came to be the center of the religious ideology of the Kingdom of Kush. The Victory Stele of Piye at Gebel Barkal (8th century BC) now distinguishes between an "Amun of Napata" and an "Amun of Thebes". Tantamani (died 653 BC), the last pharaoh of the Nubian dynasty, still bore a theophoric name referring to Amun in the Nubian form *Amani*.

Iron Age and Classical Antiquity

Nubia, Sudan and Libya

In areas outside of Egypt where the Egyptians had previously brought the cult of Amun his worship continued into Classical Antiquity. In Nubia, where his name was pronounced *Amane* or *Amani*, he remained a national deity, with his priests, at Meroe and Nobatia,^[21] regulating the whole government of the country via an oracle, choosing the ruler, and directing military expeditions. According to Diodorus Siculus, these religious leaders even were able to compel kings to commit suicide, although this tradition stopped when Arkamane, in the 3rd century BC, slew them.

In Sudan, excavation of an Amun temple at Dangeil began in 2000 under the directorship of Drs Salah Mohamed Ahmed and Julie R. Anderson of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM), Sudan and the British Museum, UK, respectively. The temple was found to have been destroyed by fire and Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) and C14 dating of the charred roof beams have placed construction of the most recent incarnation of the temple in the 1st century AD. This date is further confirmed by the associated ceramics and inscriptions. Following its destruction, the temple gradually decayed and collapsed.^[22]

In Libya there remained a solitary oracle of Amun in the Libyan Desert at the oasis of Siwa.^[23] The worship of Ammon was introduced into Greece at an early period, probably through the medium of the Greek colony in Cyrene, which must have formed a connection with the great oracle of Ammon in the Oasis soon after its establishment. Iarbas, a mythological king of Libya, was also considered a son of Hammon.

Levant

Amun is mentioned as a deity in the Hebrew Bible, and in the Nevi'im, texts presumably written in the 7th century BC, the name אֱמוֹן *No Amown* occurs twice in reference to Thebes,^[24] by the KJV rendered just as *No*:

Jeremiah 46:25:25 The Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, said: "Behold, I am bringing punishment upon Amon of Thebes, and Pharaoh and Egypt and her gods and her kings, upon Pharaoh and those who trust in him.

English Standard Version:

Nahum 3:8 "Art thou better than populous *No*, that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the sea, and her wall was from the sea?"



Depiction of Amun in a relief at Karnak (15th century BC)

Greece

Ammon had a temple and a statue, the gift of Pindar (d. 443 BC), at Thebes,^[25] and another at Sparta, the inhabitants of which, as Pausanias says,^[26] consulted the oracle of Ammon in Libya from early times more than the other Greeks. At Aphytis, Chalcidice, Ammon was worshipped, from the time of Lysander (d. 395 BC), as zealously as in Ammonium. Pindar the poet honoured the god with a hymn. At Megalopolis the god was represented with the head of a ram (Paus. viii.32 § 1), and the Greeks of Cyrenaica dedicated at Delphi a chariot with a statue of Ammon.

Such was its reputation among the Classical Greeks that Alexander the Great journeyed there after the battle of Issus and during his occupation of Egypt, where he was declared "the son of Amun" by the oracle. Alexander thereafter considered himself divine. Even during this occupation, Amun, identified by these Greeks as a form of Zeus,^[27] continued to be the principal local deity of Thebes.

Several words derive from Amun via the Greek form, *Ammon*, such as ammonia and ammonite. The Romans called the ammonium chloride they collected from deposits near the Temple of Jupiter Amun in ancient Libya *sal ammoniacus* (salt of Amun) because of proximity to the nearby temple.^[28] Ammonia, as well as being the chemical, is a genus name in the foraminifera. Both these foraminiferans (shelled Protozoa) and ammonites (extinct shelled cephalopods) bear spiral shells resembling a ram's, and Ammon's, horns. The regions of the hippocampus in the brain are called the cornu ammonis – literally "Amun's Horns", due to the horned appearance of the dark and light bands of cellular layers.

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton identifies Ammon with the biblical Ham (Cham) and states that the gentiles called him the Libyan Jove.



Zeus Ammon. Roman copy of a Greek original from the late 5th century B.C. The Greeks of the lower Nile Delta and Cyrenaica combined features of supreme god Zeus with features of the Egyptian god Ammon-Ra. Staatliche Antikensammlungen Munich.

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External links

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- **(Spanish)** Karnak 3D :: Detailed 3D-reconstruction of the Great Temple of Amun at Karnak (<http://www.karnak3d.net>), Marc Mateos, 2007
- Amun with features of Tutankhamun (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/schumata/3478852986/>) (statue, c. 1332–1292 BC, Penn Museum)

Amunet

For the Stargate character, see Amonet (Stargate). For the Egyptian goddess of the west, see Imentet.

Amunet in hieroglyphs
imnt the hidden one
[1][2] imnt the hidden one
 bas relief of Amunet in Luxor.

Amunet (/ˈæməˌnɛt/; also spelled Amonet or Amaunet) was a primordial goddess in Ancient Egyptian religion. She is a member of the Ogdoad and the consort of Amun.

Etymology

Her name, meaning "the female hidden one", was simply the feminine form of Amun's own name. Therefore, it is likely that she was never an independent deity, but was created as his female counterpart.^[2]

Myths

The Egyptians identified her with Neith as the mother of the god Ra. By at least the Twelfth dynasty she was overshadowed as Amun's consort by Mut, but she remained locally important in the region of Thebes where Amun was worshipped, and there she was seen as a protector of the pharaoh.

At Karnak, Amun's cult center, priests were dedicated to Amunet's service. The goddess also played a part in royal ceremonies such as the Sed festival.

Amunet was depicted as a woman wearing the Red Crown and carrying a staff of papyrus.

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Andjety

Andjety in hieroglyphs

Andjety is an Ancient Egyptian deity whose name is associated with the city of Andjet, which in the Greek language was called Busiris.^[1] This deity is also known by the alternative names *Anezti or Anedjti*.^[2] Andjety is considered one of the earliest Egyptian gods, possibly with roots in Predynastic Egypt.^[3]

Andjety is thought to have been a precursor of Osiris.^[4] Like Osiris he is depicted holding the crook and flail and has a crown similar to Osiris's Atef crown. King Sneferu of the 4th dynasty, builder of the first true pyramid, is shown wearing the crown of Andjety. In the Pyramid texts^[5] the king's power is associated with Andjety. In the temple of Seti I the king is shown offering incense to Osiris-Andjety who is accompanied by Isis.^[6]

Writings mentioning Andjety

[Coffin Text (CT) V-385].... I immerse the waterways as Osiris,Lord of corruption,as Adjety,bull of vultures.

[CT I-255]..... "Oh Horus Lord of Life,fare downstream and upstream from Andjety,make inspection of those who are in Djedu,come and go in Rosetau,clear the vision of those who are in the underworld.Farer upstream from Rosetau to Abydos,the primeval place of the Lord of All.

[CT IV-331]O Thoth vindicate Osiris against his foes in :--- the great tribunal which is in the two banks of the kite on the night of the drowning of the great god in Adjety.

[Pyramid texts (PT)182] ... "In your name the one who is in Andjet headman of his nomes"

[PT 220]May your staff be the head of the spirits,as Anubis who presides over the Westerners,and Andjety who presides over the eastern nomes

[PT 614] :....." Horus has revived you in this your name of Andjety^[7]

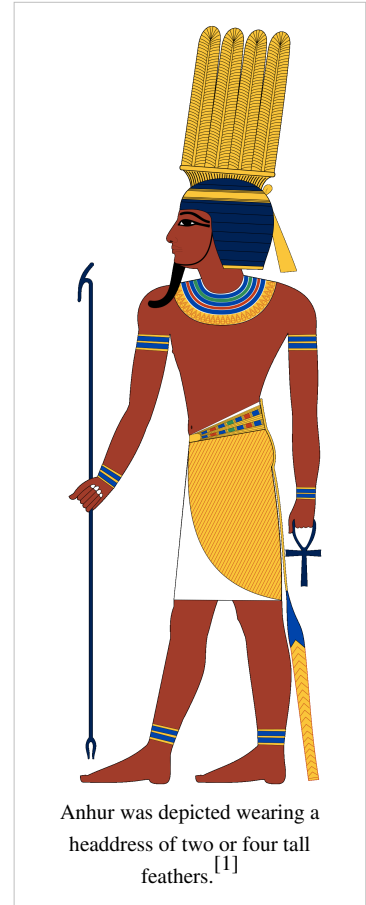
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Anhur

In early Egyptian mythology, **Anhur** (also spelled **Onuris**, **Onouris**, **An-Her**, **Anhuret**, **Han-Her**, **Inhert**) was originally a god of war who was worshipped in the Egyptian area of Abydos, and particularly in Thinis. Myths told that he had brought his wife, Menhit, who was his female counterpart, from Nubia, and his name reflects this—it means *(one who) leads back the distant one*.^[2]

One of his titles was *Slayer of Enemies*. Anhur was depicted as a bearded man wearing a robe and a headdress with four feathers, holding a spear or lance, or occasionally as a lion-headed god (representing strength and power). In some depictions, the robe was more similar to a kilt.^[3]



Due to his position as a war god, he was patron of the ancient Egyptian army, and the personification of royal warriors. Indeed, at festivals honoring him, mock battles were staged. During the Roman era the Emperor Tiberius was depicted on the walls of Egyptian temples wearing the distinctive four-plumed crown of Anhur.

Anhur's name also could mean *Sky Bearer* and, due to the shared headdress, Anhur was later identified with Shu, becoming *Anhur-Shu*.

High Priests of Anhur

- Amenhotep, from the time of Thutmose IV. Amenhotep's wife Henut was a songstress of Anhur. Their sons Hat and Kenna were Chariot Warriors of His Majesty. Known from a stela now in the British Museum (EA 902).^[4]
- Hori ^[5]
- Minmose, son of the High Priest of Anhur Hori and his wife Inty. From the reign of Ramesses II. ^[5]
- Anhurmose, from the time of Merenptah. ^{[5][6]}
- Sishepset, from the time of Ramesses III ^[6]
- Harsiese, mentioned on an ostracon in Abydos ^[6]



Amulet of Anhur

In popular culture

Anhur is a playable character in the Multiplayer online battle arena, SMITE. Anhur is a ranged carry and is nicknamed the Slayer of Enemies.^[7]

Anhur is also a chaotic god in the computer game Nethack/SLASH'EM

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External links

- Iconography of Onuris (http://www.religionswissenschaft.unizh.ch/idd/prepublications/e_idd_onuris.pdf) (PDF; article)

Anit

Anit, also spelled **Enit**, and it is a name of an ancient Egyptian goddess. She was depicted as a female wearing a headdress similar to that of Meskenet. She is often referred to as the consort of Menthu.^[1]

External links

image of Anit-The gods of the Egyptians or, Studies in Egyptian mythology.^[2] E. A. Wallis Budge Published 1904
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Anput

Anput is a goddess in ancient Egyptian religion. Her name is also rendered **Input**, **Inpewt** and **Yineput**.^[1] Her name is written in hieroglyphs as *inpwt*.^[2]

Anput	
Wife of Anubis	
Consort	Anubis

Mythology

Anput is a female counterpart of the god Anubis.^[3] She is also a goddess of the seventeenth nome of Upper Egypt.^[4]

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Hathor, Pharaoh Menkaura, and Anput

Anti (mythology)

In Egyptian mythology, **Anti** (**Antaeus** in Greek, but probably not connected to the Antaeus in Greek mythology) was a god whose worship centred at Antaeopolis, in the northern part of Upper Egypt.

His worship is quite ancient, dating from at least the 2nd dynasty, at which point he already had priests dedicated to his cult. Originally, Anti appears to have been the patron of the ancient area around Badari, which was the centre of the cult of Horus. Due to lack of surviving information, it is not very well known what the original function of Anti was, or whether he was more than just a title of Horus referring to some specific function.^[1]

Over time, he became considered simply as the god of ferrymen, and was consequently depicted as a falcon standing on a boat, a reference to Horus, who was originally considered as a falcon. As god of ferrymen, he gained the title **Nemty**, meaning (*one who*) *travels*. His later cult centre Antaeopolis was known as *Per-Nemty* (House of Nemty).

Anti appears in the tale *The Contendings of Horus and Seth* which describes the settlement of the inheritance of Osiris, seen as a metaphor for the conquest of Lower Egypt by Upper Egypt (whose patron was Seth), at the beginning of the Old Kingdom. In this tale, one of Seth's attempts to gain power consists of his gathering together the gods, and providing good arguments, convincing all of them (in later traditions, all except Thoth). Seth fears magical intervention by Isis, Horus' wife (in early Egyptian mythology), and so holds the gathering on an island, instructing Anti not to allow anyone resembling Isis to be ferried there. However, Isis disguises herself as an old woman, and unknowingly Anti takes her across after being paid a gold ring, having rejected the first offer of gruel, resulting in the disruption of the council by her use of magic. Anti is punished for his error, by having his toes cut off, which is more severe than it appears, since as a falcon, he would no longer be able to perch, and thus would not be able to reside on the boat.^[2]

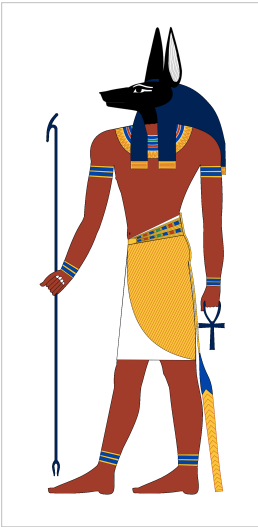
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Anubis

Anubis



The Egyptian god Anubis (a modern rendition inspired by New Kingdom tomb paintings)

Protector of the dead and embalming^[1]

Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Lycopolis, Cynopolis
Symbol	the fetish, the flail
Consort	Anput
Parents	Ra (early myth) Nephthys and Set, or Osiris (in some accounts) (later)
Siblings	Horus (in some accounts)
Offspring	Kebechet

Anubis (/əˈnuːbəs/ or /əˈnjuːbəs/;^[2] Ancient Greek: Ἄνουβις) is the Greek name^[3] for a jackal-headed god associated with mummification and the afterlife in ancient Egyptian religion. He is the son of Nephthys and Set according to the Egyptian mythology. According to the Akkadian transcription in the Amarna letters, Anubis' name was vocalized in Egyptian as *Anapa*.^[4] The oldest known mention of Anubis is in the Old Kingdom pyramid texts, where he is associated with the burial of the pharaoh.[□] At this time, Anubis was the most important god of the dead but he was replaced during the Middle Kingdom by Osiris.^[5]

He takes names in connection with his funerary role, such as *He who is upon his mountain*, which underscores his importance as a protector of the deceased and their tombs, and the title *He who is in the place of embalming*, associating him with the process of mummification.[□] Like many ancient Egyptian deities, Anubis assumes different roles in various contexts. Anubis also attends the weighing scale in the Afterlife during the "Weighing Of The Heart".^[6] Anubis' wife is a goddess called Anput. His daughter is the goddess Kebechet.

Portrayal

Anubis was associated with the mummification and protection of the dead for their journey into the afterlife. He was usually portrayed as a half human, half jackal, or in full jackal form wearing a ribbon and holding a flail in the crook of its arm.^[1] The jackal [Note: recent genetic studies show that the Egyptian jackal is actually a form of the grey wolf and has thus been renamed the "Egyptian Wolf"^[1]] was strongly associated with cemeteries in ancient Egypt, since it was a scavenger which threatened to uncover human bodies and eat their flesh.^[7] The distinctive black color of Anubis "did not have to do with the jackal [per se] but with the color of rotting flesh and with the black soil of the Nile valley, symbolizing rebirth."^[7] The only known depiction of him in fully human form is in the tomb of Ramesses II in Abydos.^[8]

Anubis is depicted in funerary contexts where he is shown attending to the mummies of the deceased or sitting atop a tomb protecting it. In fact, during embalming, the "head embalmer" wore an Anubis costume. The critical weighing of the heart scene in the *Book of the Dead* also shows Anubis performing the measurement that determined the worthiness of the deceased to enter the realm of the dead (the underworld, known as *Duat*). New Kingdom tomb-seals also depict Anubis sitting atop the nine bows that symbolize his domination over the enemies of Egypt.^[1]

Embalmer

One of the roles of Anubis was "Guardian of the Scales".^[9] Deciding the weight of "truth" by weighing the Heart against Ma'at, who was often depicted as an ostrich feather, Anubis dictated the fate of souls. In this manner, he was a Lord of the Underworld, only usurped by Osiris.

Anubis is a son of Ra in early myths, but later he became known as son of Set and Nephthys, and he helped Isis mummify Osiris.^[7] Indeed, when the Myth of Osiris and Isis emerged, it was said that when Osiris had been killed by Set, Osiris' organs were given to Anubis as a gift. With this connection, Anubis became the patron god of embalmers: during the funerary rites of mummification, illustrations from the *Book of the Dead* often show a priest wearing the jackal mask supporting the upright mummy.

Perceptions outside Egypt

In later times, during the Ptolemaic period, Anubis was merged with the Greek god Hermes, becoming Hermanubis.^[10] The centre of this cult was in *uten-ha/Sa-kal* Cynopolis, a place whose Greek name simply means "city of dogs". In Book XI of "The Golden Ass" by Apuleius, we find evidence that the worship of this god was maintained in Rome at least up to the 2nd century. Indeed, Hermanubis also appears in the alchemical and hermetical literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Although the Greeks and Romans typically scorned Egypt's animal-headed gods as bizarre and primitive (Anubis was known to be mockingly called "Barker" by the Greeks), Anubis was sometimes associated with Sirius in the heavens, and Cerberus in Hades. In his dialogues,^[11] Plato has Socrates utter, "by the dog" (*kai me ton kuna*), "by the dog of Egypt", "by the dog, the god of the Egyptians",^[12] for emphasis. Anubis is also known as the god of mummification and death - unlike other jackals, Anubis' head was black to resemble his status as god of death.

Birth

Usually, Anubis is portrayed as the son of Nephthys and Set, Osiris' brother and the god of the desert and darkness. One myth says that Nephthys got Osiris drunk and the resultant seduction brought forth Anubis. Yet another says she disguised herself as Isis and seduced Osiris and subsequently gave birth to Anubis.^[1]



Anubis statue from the Tomb of Tutankhamun (Cairo Museum).



Anubis attending the mummy of the deceased.



Statue of Hermanubis (Vatican Museums)



Anubis mask, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim



A worshipper kneeling before Anubis, Walters Art Museum

Misconceptions in Popular Media

The 2008 comic documentary *Religulous* refers to Anubis, as "Anup the Baptizer" and says that he performed baptisms in Egyptian mythology. There is no evidence for baptism and it is widely held by Egyptologists that Anubis' role was associated with the mummification and protection of the dead for their journey into the afterlife. Anubis and Wepwawet (Upuaut) led the deceased to the halls of Maat where they would be judged. Anubis oversaw the process and ensured that the weighing of the heart was conducted correctly. He then led the innocent on to a heavenly existence and abandoned the guilty to Ammit.^[13]

Weighing of the heart

The weighing of the heart ceremony was an important factor of the Egyptian mythology. In this ceremony, the heart was weighed by Anubis, against an ostrich feather representing Maat or truth. If the heart was heavier than the feather the soul would be devoured by Ammit.^[14]

References

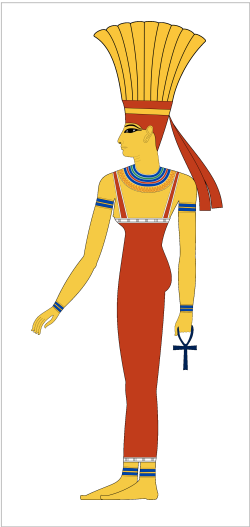
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- [2] *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition*. Merriam-Webster, 2007. p. 56
- [5] Charles Freeman, *The Legacy of Ancient Egypt*, Facts on File, Inc. 1997. p.91
- [7] Freeman, op. cit., p.91
- [8] <http://www.ancient-egypt.org/index.html>
- [11] e.g. *Republic* 399e, 592a
- [12] *Gorgias*, 482b
- [14] http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/young_explorers/discover/museum_explorer/ancient_egypt/death/weighing_the_heart.aspx

External links

- Anubis – Archaeowiki.org (<http://www.archaeowiki.org/Anubis>)

Anuket

Anuket



The goddess Anuket, depicted as a woman with a tall, plumed headdress

Goddess of the river

Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Elephantine, Seheil
Parents	Khnum and Satet

In Egyptian mythology, **Anuket** (also spelt **Anqet**, and in Greek, **Anukis**) was originally the personification and goddess of the Nile river, in areas such as Elephantine, at the start of the Nile's journey through Egypt, and in nearby regions of Nubia.

Anuket was part of a triad with the god Khnum, and the goddess Satis. It is possible that Anuket was considered the daughter of Khnum and Satis in this triad, or she may have been a junior consort to Khnum instead. ^[1] Anuket was depicted as a woman with a headdress of feathers ^[1] (thought by most Egyptologists to be a detail deriving from Nubia). ^[citation needed] Her sacred animal was the gazelle.

A temple dedicated to Anuket was erected on the Island of Seheil. Inscriptions show that a shrine or altar was dedicated to her at this site by the 13th dynasty Pharaoh Sobekhotep III. Much later, during the 18th dynasty, Amenhotep II dedicated a chapel to the goddess. ^[2]

During the New Kingdom, Anuket's cult at Elephantine included a river procession of the goddess during the first month of Shemu. Inscriptions mention the processional festival of Khnum and Anuket during this time period. ^[3]

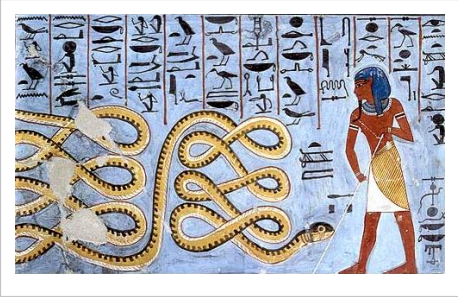
Ceremonially, when the Nile started its annual flood, the **Festival of Anuket** began. People threw coins, gold, jewelry, and precious gifts into the river, in thanks for the life-giving water and returning benefits derived from the wealth provided by her fertility to the goddess. The taboo held in several parts of Egypt, against eating certain fish which were considered sacred, was lifted during this time, suggesting that a fish species of the Nile was a totem for Anuket and that they were consumed as part of the ritual of her major religious festival. ^[citation needed]

References

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 - [2] Kathryn A. Bard, *Encyclopedia of the archaeology of ancient Egypt*, Psychology Press, 1999, p 178
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-

Apep

Apep

An ancient Egyptian wall painting depicting the god Atum, shown as a falcon-headed man in a yellow kilt, standing and holding a staff. He is facing a large, coiled golden snake representing Apep. The background is blue with hieroglyphs.

Atum and snake Apep

Parents	Neith
Siblings	Ra

Apep (/ˈæ.pɛp/ or /ˈɑː.pɛp/) or **Apophis** (/ˈæpəfɪs/; Ancient Greek: Ἀποφίς; also spelled Apepi or Aapep) was an evil god in ancient Egyptian religion, the deification of darkness and chaos (*izft* in Egyptian), and thus opponent of light and Ma'at (order/truth), whose existence was believed from the 8th Dynasty (mentioned at Moalla) onwards. His name is reconstructed by Egyptologists as *Aʿpāpī, as it was written ꜥꜥ(y) and survived in later Coptic as Ⲭⲣⲟⲩ *Aphōph*.^[1]

Development

ꜥꜥ^[2]<ref name="1">

Apep

in hieroglyphs

Ra was the solar deity, bringer of light, and thus the upholder of Ma'at. Apep was viewed as the greatest enemy of Ra, and thus was given the title *Enemy of Ra*.

As the personification of all that was evil, Apep was seen as a giant snake/serpent, or occasionally as a dragon in later years, leading to such titles as *Serpent from the Nile* and *Evil Lizard*. Some elaborations even said that he stretched 16 yards in length and had a head made of flint. It is to be noted that already on a Naqada I (ca. 4000 BC) C-ware bowl (now in Cairo) a snake was painted on the inside rim combined with other desert and aquatic animals as a possible enemy of a deity, possibly a solar deity, who is invisibly hunting in a big rowing vessel.^[3]

Also, comparable hostile snakes as enemies of the sun god existed under other names (in the Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts) already before the name Apep occurred. The etymology of his name (ꜥꜥpp) is perhaps to be sought in some west-semitic language where a word root ꜥpp meaning 'to slither' existed. A verb root ꜥꜥpp does at any rate not exist elsewhere in Ancient Egyptian. (It is not to be confused with the verb ꜥpi/ꜥpp: 'to fly across the sky, to travel') Apep's name much later came to be falsely connected etymologically in Egyptian with a different root meaning (*he who was*) *spat out*; the Romans referred to Apep by this translation of his name. Apophis was a large golden snake known to be miles long. He was so large that he attempted to swallow the sun every day.

Set eventually became thought of as the god of evil, and gradually took on all the characteristics of Apep. Consequently, Apep's identity was eventually entirely subsumed by that of Set.^[4]

Battles with Ra

Tales of Apep's battles against Ra were elaborated during the New Kingdom.^[6] Since nearly everyone can see that the sun is not attacked by a giant snake during the day, every day, storytellers said that Apep must lie just below the horizon. This appropriately made him a part of the underworld. In some stories Apep waited for Ra in a western mountain called *Bakhu*, where the sun set, and in others Apep lurked just before dawn, in the *Tenth region of the Night*. The wide range of Apep's possible location gained him the title *World Encircler*. It was thought that his terrifying roar would cause the underworld to rumble. Myths sometimes say that Apep was trapped there, because he had been the previous chief god and suffered a coup d'etat by Ra, or because he was evil and had been imprisoned.

In his battles, Apep was thought to use a magical gaze to hypnotize Ra and his entourage, attempting to devour them whilst choking the river on which they traveled through the underworld with his coils. Sometimes Apep had assistance from other demons, named Sek and Mot. Ra was assisted by a number of defenders who travelled with him, the most powerful being Set, who sat at the helm.

In a bid to explain certain natural phenomena it was said that occasionally Apep got the upper hand. The damage to order caused thunderstorms and earthquakes. Indeed: it was even thought that sometimes Apep actually managed to swallow Ra during the day, causing a solar eclipse, but since Ra's defenders quickly cut him free of Apep, the eclipse always ended within a few minutes. On the occasions when Apep was said to have been killed, he was able to return each night (since he lived in the world of the dead already). In Atenism it is Aten who kills the monster since Aten is the only god in the belief system.

However, in other myths, it was the cat goddess Bast, daughter of Ra, who slew Apep in her cat form one night, hunting him down with her all seeing eye.

Worship

Ra was so very much worshipped, and Apep worshipped against. His victory each night was thought to be ensured by the prayers of the Egyptian priests and worshipers at temples. The Egyptians practiced a number of rituals and superstitions that were thought to ward off Apep, and aid Ra to continue his journey across the sky.

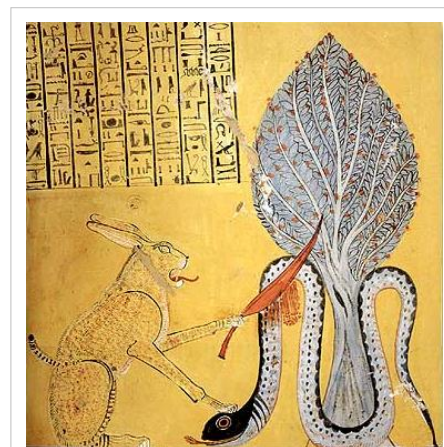
In an annual rite, called the *Banishing of Chaos*, priests would build an effigy of Apep that was thought to contain all of the evil and darkness in Egypt, and burn it to protect everyone from Apep's evil for another year, in a similar manner to modern rituals such as Zozobra.

The Egyptian priests even had a detailed *guide* to fighting Apep, referred to as *The Books of Overthrowing Apep* (or the *Book of Apophis*, in Greek).^[7] The chapters described a gradual process of dismemberment and disposal, and include:

Spitting Upon Apep
Defiling Apep with the Left Foot
Taking a Lance to Smite Apep



Set speared Apep



The sun god Ra, in the form of Great Cat, slays the snake Apep^[5]

Fettering Apep
Taking a Knife to Smite Apep
Putting Fire Upon Apep

In addition to stories about Ra's winnings, this guide had instructions for making wax models, or small drawings, of the serpent, which would be spat on, mutilated and burnt, whilst reciting spells that would kill Apep. Fearing that even the image of Apep could give power to the demon any rendering would always include another deity to subdue the monster.

As Apep was thought to live in the underworld, he was sometimes thought of as an *Eater of Souls*. Thus the dead also needed protection, so they were sometimes buried with spells that could destroy Apep. The *Book of the Dead* does not frequently describe occasions when Ra defeated the chaos snake explicitly called Apep. Only BD Spells 7 and 39 can be explained as such.^[8]

Notes

- [1] Erman, Adolf, and Hermann Grapow, eds. 1926–1953. *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache im Auftrage der deutschen Akademien*. 6 vols. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'schen Buchhandlungen. (Reprinted Berlin: Akademie-Verlag GmbH, 1971).
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- [3] C.Wolterman, in *Jaarbericht van Ex Oriente Lux*, Leiden Nr.37 (2002).
- [4] H. Te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion* (Leiden, 1977), 105-7.
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- [6] J. Assmann, *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom*, transl. by A. Alcock (London, 1995), 49-57.
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- [8] J.F.Borghouts, *Book of the Dead [39]: From Shouting to Structure* (Studien zum Altaegyptischen Totenbuch 10, Wiesbaden, 2007).

External links

- Apep, Water Snake-Demon of Chaos, Enemy of Ra... (<http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/apep.html>)
- ancient Egypt: The Mythology - Apep (<http://www.egyptianmyths.net/apep.htm>)

Apis (god)



, or , or , or
Apis in hieroglyphs

In Egyptian mythology, **Apis** or **Hapis** (alternatively spelled **Hapi-ankh**), is a bull-deity that was worshipped in the Memphis region.

According to Manetho, his worship was instituted by Kaiechos of the Second Dynasty. Hape (Apis) is named on very early monuments, but little is known of the divine animal before the New Kingdom. Ceremonial burials of bulls indicate that ritual sacrifice was part of the worship of the early cow deities and a bull might represent a king who became a deity after death. He was entitled "the renewal of the life" of the Memphite god Ptah: but after death he became Osorapis, i.e. the Osiris Apis, just as dead humans were assimilated to Osiris, the king of the underworld. This Osorapis was identified with the Hellenistic Serapis, and may well be identical with him. Greek writers make the Apis an incarnation of Osiris, ignoring the connection with Ptah.

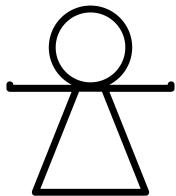
Apis was the most important of all the sacred animals in Egypt, and, as with the others, its importance increased as time went on. Greek and Roman authors have much to say about Apis, the marks by which the black bull-calf was

recognized, the manner of his conception by a ray from heaven, his house at Memphis with court for disporting himself, the mode of prognostication from his actions, the mourning at his death, his costly burial, and the rejoicings throughout the country when a new Apis was found. Mariette's excavation of the Serapeum at Memphis revealed the tombs of over sixty animals, ranging from the time of Amenophis III to that of Ptolemy Alexander. At first each animal was buried in a separate tomb with a chapel built above it.

Khamuis, the priestly son of Ramesses II (c. 1300 B.C.), excavated a great gallery to be lined with the tomb chambers; another similar gallery was added by Psammetichus I. The careful statement of the ages of the animals in the later instances, with the regnal dates for their birth, enthronization, and death have thrown much light on the chronology from the Twenty-second dynasty onwards. The name of the mother-cow and the place of birth often are recorded. The sarcophagi are of immense size, and the burial must have entailed enormous expense. It is therefore remarkable that the priests contrived to bury one of the animals in the fourth year of Cambyses.

Herald of Ptah

The cult of the Apis bull started at the very beginning of Egyptian history, probably as a fertility god connected to grain and the herds. In a funerary context, the Apis was a protector of the deceased, and linked to the pharaoh. This animal was chosen because it symbolized the king's courageous heart, great strength, virility, and fighting spirit. The Apis bull was considered to be a manifestation of the pharaoh, as bulls were symbols of strength and fertility, qualities which are closely linked with kingship ("strong bull of his mother Hathor" was a common title for gods and pharaohs).



The symbol resembling an ankh that the markings of an Apis bull would have created on his head when depicted with his mother's sun disk

Occasionally, the Apis bull was pictured with her sun-disk between his horns, being one of few deities associated with her symbol. When the disk was depicted on his head with his horns below and the triangle on his forehead, an ankh was suggested. It also is a symbol closely associated with his mother. The Apis bull is unique as he is the only Egyptian deity represented solely as an animal, and never as a human with an animal's head—perhaps, because from the earliest of Egyptian religious practices, they were animals sacrificed to the cow goddess and represented the resurrected, renewal of life (Hapy and later Osiris).

Apis was originally the Herald (wHm) of Ptah, the chief god in the area around Memphis. As a manifestation of Ptah, Apis also was considered to be a symbol of the pharaoh, embodying the qualities of kingship.

The bovines in the region in which Ptah was worshipped exhibited white patterning on their mainly black bodies, and so a belief grew up that the Apis bull had to have a certain set of markings suitable to its role. It was required to have a white triangle upon its forehead, a white vulture wing outline on its back, a scarab mark under its tongue, a white crescent moon shape on its right flank, and double hairs on its tail.

The bull which matched these markings was selected from the herd, brought to a temple, given a harem of cows, and worshipped as an aspect of Ptah. His mother was believed to have been conceived by a flash of lightning from the heavens, or from moonbeams, and also was treated specially. At the temple, Apis was used as an oracle, his movements being interpreted as prophecies. His breath was believed to cure disease, and his presence to bless those around with virility. He was given a window in the temple through which he could be seen, and on certain holidays was led through the streets of the city, bedecked with jewelry and flowers.

Ka of Osiris

When Osiris absorbed the identity of Ptah, becoming *Ptah-Seker-Osiris*, the Apis bull became considered an aspect of Osiris rather than Ptah. Since Osiris was lord of the dead, the Apis then became known as the *living deceased one*. As he now represented Osiris, when the Apis bull reached the age of twenty-eight, the age when Osiris was said to have been killed by Set, symbolic of the lunar month, and the new moon, the bull was put to death with a great sacrificial ceremony.

There is evidence that parts of the body of the Apis bull were eaten by the pharaoh and the priests to absorb the Apis's great strength. Sometimes the body of the bull was mummified and fixed in a standing position on a foundation made of wooden planks. Bulls' horns embellish some of the tombs of ancient pharaohs, and the Apis bull was often depicted on private coffins as a powerful protector. As a form of Osiris, lord of the dead, it was believed that to be under the protection of the Apis bull would give the person control over the four winds in the afterlife.

By the New Kingdom, the remains of the Apis bulls were interred at the cemetery of Saqqara. The earliest known burial in Saqqara was performed in the reign of Amenhotep III by his son Thutmosis; afterwards, seven more bulls were buried nearby. Ramesses II initiated Apis burials in what is now known as *the Serapeum*, an underground complex of burial chambers at Saqqara for the sacred bulls, a site used through the rest of Egyptian history into the reign of Cleopatra VII.

The Apis was a god to be venerated for his excellent kindness and for his mercy towards all strangers. Apis was the most popular of the three great bull cults of ancient Egypt (the others being the bulls Mnewer and Bakha.) Unlike the cults of most of the other Egyptian deities, the worship of the Apis bull was continued by the Greeks and after them by the Romans, and lasted until almost 400 A.D.



A stele commemorating the burial of a sacrificial bull bearing the iconography of Hathor

From bull to man

Under Ptolemy Soter, efforts were made to integrate Egyptian religion with that of their Hellenic rulers. Ptolemy's policy was to find a deity that should win the reverence alike of both groups, despite the curses of the Egyptian priests against the gods of the previous foreign rulers (i.e. Set who was lauded by the Hyksos). Alexander had attempted to use Amun for this purpose, but he was more prominent in Upper Egypt, which was not so popular with those in Lower Egypt, where the Greeks had stronger influence. Nevertheless, the Greeks had little respect for animal-headed figures, and so a Greek statue was chosen as the idol, and proclaimed as anthropomorphic equivalent of the highly popular Apis. It was named *Aser-hapi* (i.e. *Osiris-Apis*), which became **Serapis**, and was said to be Osiris in full, rather than just his Ka.

The earliest mention of a *Serapis* is in the authentic death scene of Alexander, from the royal diaries (Arrian, *Anabasis*, VII. 26). Here, *Serapis* has a temple at Babylon, and is of such importance that he alone is named as being consulted on behalf of the dying king. His presence in Babylon would radically alter perceptions of the mythologies of this era, though fortunately, it has been discovered that the unconnected Babylonian god Ea was titled *Serapsi*, meaning *king of the deep*, and it is this Serapsi which is referred to in the diaries. The significance of this *Serapsi* in the Hellenic psyche, due to its involvement in Alexander's death, may have also contributed to the choice of *Osiris-Apis* as the chief Ptolemaic god.

According to Plutarch, Ptolemy stole the statue from Sinope, having been instructed in a dream by the *unknown god*, to bring the statue to Alexandria, where the statue was pronounced to be Serapis by two religious experts. One of the experts was one of the Eumolpidae, the ancient family from whose members the hierophant of the Eleusinian Mysteries had been chosen since before history, and the other was the scholarly Egyptian priest Manetho, which gave weight to the judgement both for the Egyptians and the Greeks.

Plutarch may not however be correct, as some Egyptologists allege that the *Sinope* in the tale is really the hill of Sinopeion, a name given to the site of the already existing Serapeum at Memphis. Also, according to Tacitus, Serapis (i.e. Apis explicitly identified as Osiris in full) had been the god of the village of Rhacotis, before it suddenly expanded into the great capital of Alexandria.

The statue suitably depicted a figure resembling Hades or Pluto, both being kings of the Greek underworld, and was shown enthroned with the *modius*, which is a basket/grain-measure, on his head, since it was a Greek symbol for the land of the dead. He also held a sceptre in his hand indicating his rulership, with Cerberus, gatekeeper of the underworld, resting at his feet, and it also had what appeared to be a serpent at its base, fitting the Egyptian symbol of rulership, the uraeus.



Bust of the Hellenistic-Egyptian god **Serapis**, Roman copy of an original by Bryaxis which stood at the Serapeion of Alexandria, Vatican Museums.



Egyptian pendant represents lions or Apis Bull.^[1] The Walters Art Museum.

With his (i.e., Osiris') wife, Isis, and their son (at this point in history) Horus (in the form of *Harpocrates*), Serapis won an important place in the Greek world, reaching Ancient Rome, with Anubis being identified as Cerberus. The cult survived until 385 AD, when Christians destroyed the Serapeum of Alexandria, and subsequently the cult was forbidden by the Theodosian decree.

References

External links

- The Virtual Egyptian Museum: Apis (<http://www.virtual-egyptian-museum.org/Collection/FullVisit/Collection.FullVisit-JFR.html?../Content/MET.LL.00887.html&0>)
- This article incorporates text from a publication now in the public domain: Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Arensnuphis

or
Irihemesznefer ^[1] in hieroglyphs

Arensnuphis (in Egyptian: Iryhemesnefer, *iri-ḥms-nfr*, "the good companion") is a deity from the Kingdom of Kush in ancient Nubia, first attested at Musawwarat el-Sufra in the 3rd century BC. His worship spread to the Egyptian-controlled portion of Nubia in the Ptolemaic Period (305–30 BC). His mythological role is unknown; he was depicted as a lion and as a human with a crown of feathers and sometimes a spear.^[2]

Arensnuphis was worshipped at Philae, where he was called the "companion" of the Egyptian goddess Isis, and at Dendur. The Egyptians syncretized him with their gods Anhur and Shu.^[2]

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- ↑ Erman, Adolf & Grapow, Hermann (ed.): *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache*., Im Auftrage der Deutschen Akademien. Berlin: Akademie Verlag (1971), I, p.105., II, p.254
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Ash (god)



Ash was the ancient Egyptian god of oases,^[1] as well as the Vineyards of the western Nile Delta^[1] and thus was viewed as a benign deity. Flinders-Petrie in his 1923 expedition to the Saqqara (also spelt Sakkara) found several references to Ash in Old Kingdom wine jar seals: *I am refreshed by this Ash* was a common inscription.

In particular, he was identified by the Ancient Egyptians as the god of the Libu and Tinqu tribes,^[1] known as the *people of the oasis*. Consequently Ash was known as the *lord of Libya*, the western border areas occupied by the Libu and Tinqu tribes,^[1] corresponds roughly with the area of modern Libya. It is also possible that he was worshiped in Ombos, as their original chief deity.^[1]

In Egyptian mythology, as god of the oases, Ash was associated with Set, who was originally god of the desert, and was seen as protector of the Sahara. The first known reference to Ash dates to the Protodynastic Period, but by the late 2nd Dynasty, his importance had grown, and he was seen as protector of the royal estates, since the related god Set, in Lower Egypt, was regarded as the patron deity of royalty itself. Ash's importance was such that he was mentioned even until the 26th Dynasty.

Ash was usually depicted as a human,^[1] whose head was one of the desert creatures, variously being shown as a lion, vulture, hawk,^[1] snake, or the unidentified Set-animal.^[2] Indeed, depictions of Ash are the earliest known depictions^[citation needed], in ancient Egyptian art, to show a deity as a human with the head of an animal.

Some depictions of Ash show him as having multiple heads, unlike other Egyptian deities, although some compound depictions were occasionally shown connecting gods to Min. In an article in the journal *Ancient Egypt* (in 1923), and again in an appendix to her book, *The Splendor that was Egypt*, Margaret Murray expands on such depictions, and draws a parallel to a Scythian deity, who is referenced in Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia universalis*.

The idea of Ash as an import god is contested, as he was the god of Ombos long before Set's introduction sometime in the 2nd Dynasty. One of his titles is "Nebuty" or "He of Nebut" indicating this position.^[1]

Ash is sometimes seen as another name for Set—similarly as one might give the name Ta-Bitjet for Serket, Dunanwy for Anti, or Sefkhet-Abwy for Sheshat.

References

[1] Francoise Dunand, Christiane Zivie-Coche, *Gods and Men in Egypt: 3000 BCE to 395 CE*, Cornell University Press 2005, ISBN 0-8014-8853-2, p.344

[2] Dunand, Zivie, *op.cit.*, p.344

Astarte

Deities of the ancient Near East

Religions of the ancient Near East

Astarte /æˈstɑːrti/ (Ancient Greek: Ἀστάρτη, "Astártē") is the Greek name of the Mesopotamian (ie Assyrian, Akkadian, Babylonian) Semitic goddess Ishtar known throughout the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean from the early Bronze Age to Classical times. It is one of a number of names associated with the chief goddess or female divinity of those peoples.^[1] She is found as Ugaritic 𐎠𐎲𐎠𐎲 (ʾttrt , "Attart" or "Athtart"); in Phoenician as 𐤀𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 (ʾštrt, "Ashtart"); in Hebrew עֲשֶׁת־רֶתֶת (*Ashtoret*, singular, or *Ashtarot*, plural); and appears originally in Akkadian as 𒌦𒌦𒌦𒌦^D, the grammatically masculine name of the goddess *Ishtar*; the form *Astartu* is used to describe her age.^[2] The name appears also in Etruscan as 𐌓𐌓𐌓 𐌓𐌓𐌓𐌓 *Uni-Astre* (Pyrgi Tablets), *Ishtar* or *Ashtart*.



Astarte riding in a chariot with four branches protruding from roof, on the reverse of a Julia Maesa coin from Sidon

Overview

Astarte was connected with fertility, sexuality, and war. Her symbols were the lion, the horse, the sphinx, the dove, and a star within a circle indicating the planet Venus. Pictorial representations often show her naked. She has been known as the deified evening star.^[2]

Astarte (Ishtar) was accepted by the Greeks under the name of Aphrodite or, alternatively, Artemis. The island of Cyprus, one of Astarte's greatest faith centers, supplied the name Cypris as Aphrodite's most common byname.

Other major centers of Astarte's worship were the Phoenician city states of Sidon, Tyre, and Byblos. Coins from Sidon portray a chariot in which a globe appears, presumably a stone representing Astarte. "She was often depicted on Sidonian coins as standing on the prow of a galley, leaning forward with right hand outstretched, being thus the original of all figureheads for sailing ships."^[3] In Sidon, she shared a temple with Eshmun. Coins from Beirut show Poseidon, Astarte, and Eshmun worshipped together.

Other faith centers were Cythera, Malta, and Eryx in Sicily from which she became known to the Romans as Venus Erycina. A bilingual inscription on the Pyrgi Tablets dating to about 500 BC found near Caere in Etruria equates Astarte with Etruscan Uni-Astre that is, Juno. At Carthage Astarte was worshipped alongside the goddess Tanit.

Donald Harden in *The Phoenicians* discusses a statuette of Astarte from Tutugi (Galera) near Granada in Spain dating to the 7th or 6th century BC in which Astarte sits on a throne flanked by sphinxes holding a bowl beneath her pierced breasts. A hollow in the statue would have been filled with milk through the head and gentle heating would have melted wax plugging the holes in her breasts, producing an apparent miracle when the milk emerged.

The Aramean goddess Atargatis (Semitic form *ʿAtarʿatah*) may originally have been equated with Astarte, but the first element of the name Atargatis appears to be related to the Ugaritic form of Asherah's name: Athirat.



Lady of Galera

Astarte in Ugarit

Astarte appears in Ugaritic texts under the name *ʿAthtart*, but is little mentioned in those texts. *ʿAthtart* and *ʿAnat* together hold back *Baʿal* from attacking the other deities. Astarte also asks *Baʿal* to "scatter" *Yamm* "Sea" after *Baʿal*'s victory. *ʿAthtart* is called the "Face of *Baʿal*".

Astarte in Egypt

Astarte arrived in Ancient Egypt during the 18th dynasty along with other deities who were worshipped by northwest Semitic people. She was especially worshipped in her aspect as a warrior goddess, often paired with the goddess *Anat*.

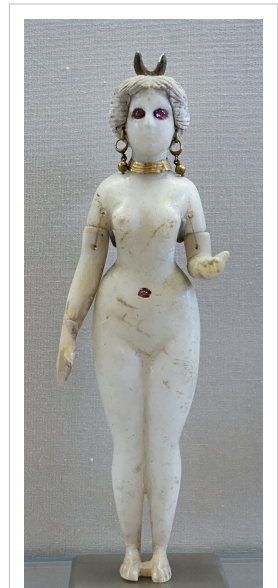
In the *Contest Between Horus and Set*, these two goddesses appear as daughters of Ra and are given in marriage to the god Set, here identified with the Semitic name Hadad. Astarte also was identified with the lioness warrior goddess *Sekhmet*, but seemingly more often conflated, at least in part, with *Isis* to judge from the many images found of Astarte suckling a small child. Indeed there is a statue of the 6th century BC in the Cairo Museum, which normally would be taken as portraying *Isis* with her child *Horus* on her knee and which in every detail of iconography follows normal Egyptian conventions, but the dedicatory inscription reads: "Gersaphon, son of Azor, son of Slrt, man of Lydda, for his Lady, for Astarte." See G. Daressy, (1905) pl. LXI (CGC 39291).

Plutarch, in his *On Isis and Osiris*, indicates that the King and Queen of Byblos, who, unknowingly, have the body of *Osiris* in a pillar in their hall, are *Melcarthus* (i.e. *Melqart*) and Astarte (though he notes some instead call the Queen *Saosis* or *Nemanūs*, which Plutarch interprets as corresponding to the Greek name *Athenais*)^[*citation needed*]Wikipedia:Disputed statement.

Astarte in Phoenicia

In the description of the Phoenician pantheon ascribed to Sanchuniathon, Astarte appears as a daughter of Epigeius (Greek: Uranus) and Ge (Earth), and sister of the god Elus. After Elus overthrows and banishes his father Epigeius, as some kind of trick Epigeius sends Elus his "virgin daughter" Astarte along with her sisters Asherah and the goddess who will later be called Ba'alat Gebal, "the Lady of Byblos". It seems that this trick does not work, as all three become wives of their brother Elus. Astarte bears Elus children who appear under Greek names as seven daughters called the *Titanides* or *Artemides* and two sons named *Pothos* "Longing" and *Eros* "Desire". Later with Elus' consent, Astarte and Hadad reign over the land together. Astarte puts the head of a bull on her own head to symbolize Her sovereignty. Wandering through the world, Astarte takes up a star that has fallen from the sky (a meteorite) and consecrates it at Tyre.

Ashteroth Karnaim (Astarte was called Ashteroth in the Hebrew Bible) was a city in the land of Bashan east of the Jordan River, mentioned in Genesis 14:5 and Joshua 12:4 (where it is rendered solely as Ashteroth). The name translates literally to 'Ashteroth of the Horns', with 'Ashteroth' being a Canaanite fertility goddess and 'horns' being symbolic of mountain peaks. Figurines of Astarte have been found at various archaeological sites in Israel, showing the goddess with two horns.^[4]



Figurine of Astarte with a horned headdress

Astarte's most common symbol was the crescent moon (or horns), according to religious studies scholar Jeffrey Burton Russell, in his book *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity*.^[5]

Astarte in Judah

Ashtoreth is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible as a foreign, non-Judahite goddess, the principal goddess of the Sidonians or Phoenicians, representing the productive power of nature. It is generally accepted that the Masoretic "vowel pointing" adopted c. 135 AD, indicating the pronunciation *ʿAštōret* ("Ashtoreth," "Ashtoret") is a deliberate distortion of "Ashtart", and that this is probably because the two last syllables have been pointed with the vowels belonging to *bōšet*, ("bosheth," abomination), to indicate that that word should be substituted when reading.^[6] The plural form is pointed *ʿAštārōt* ("Ashtaroth"). The biblical Ashtoreth should not be confused with the goddess Asherah, the form of the names being quite distinct, and both appearing quite distinctly in the Book of 1st Kings. (In Biblical Hebrew, as in other older Semitic languages, Asherah begins with an *aleph* or glottal stop consonant א, while ʿAshtoreth begins with an ʿayin or voiced pharyngeal consonant ع, indicating the lack of any plausible etymological connection between the two names.) The biblical writers may, however, have conflated some attributes and titles of the two, as seems to have occurred throughout the 1st millennium Levant.^[7] For instance, the title "Queen of heaven" as mentioned in *Jeremiah* has been connected with both. (In later Jewish mythology, she became a female demon of lust; for what seems to be the use of the Hebrew plural form *ʿAštārōt* in this sense, see Astaroth).

Other associations

Some ancient sources assert that in the territory of Sidon the temple of Astarte was sacred to Europa. According to an old Cretan story, Europa was a Phoenician princess whom Zeus, having transformed himself into a white bull, abducted, and carried to Crete.^[8]

Some scholars claim that the cult of the Minoan snake goddess who is identified with Ariadne (the "utterly pure")^[9] was similar to the cult of Astarte. Her cult as Aphrodite was transmitted to Cythera and then to Greece.^[10] Herodotus wrote that the religious community of Aphrodite originated in Phoenicia and came to Greeks from there. He also wrote about the world's largest temple of Aphrodite, in one of the Phoenician cities. Her name is the second name in an energy chant sometimes used in Wicca: "Isis, Astarte, Diana, Hecate, Demeter, Kali, Inanna."^[11]

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- [4] Raphael Patai. *The Hebrew Goddess* (http://books.google.com/books?id=VfAX_wkMM4IC&pg=PA57&dq=astarte+horn&hl=en&ei=hwTwTcOpJJKesQOfgo2ZDg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=astarte+horn&f=false). (Wayne State University Press 1990). ISBN 0-8143-2271-9 p. 57.
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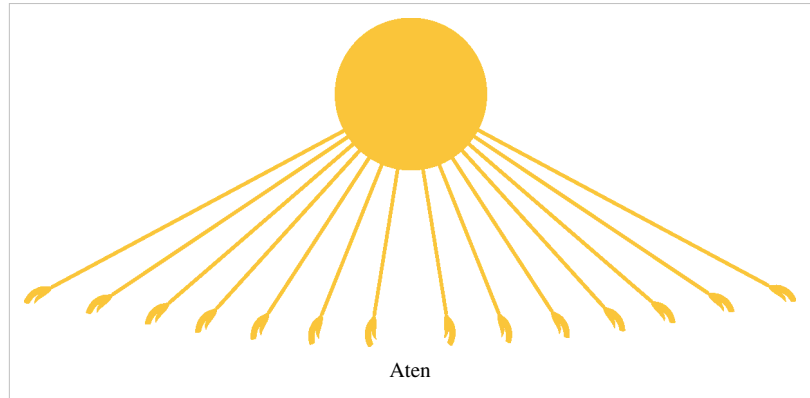
External links

- Britannica Online Encyclopedia - Astarte (ancient deity) (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/39661/Astarte>)
 - Goddess Astarte: Goddess of Fertility, Beauty, War, and Love (<http://www.matrifocus.com/IMB04/spotlight.htm>)
 - Jewish Encyclopedia - Astarte worship among the Hebrews (<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/2048-astarte-worship-among-the-hebrews>)
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Aten

Alternative use: the Aten asteroids, named after 2062 Aten

Aten (also **Aton**, Egyptian *jtn*) is the disk of the sun in ancient Egyptian mythology, and originally an aspect of Ra. The deified Aten is the focus of the monolatristic, henotheistic, or monotheistic religion of Atenism established by Amenhotep IV, who later took the name Akhenaten in worship and recognition of Aten. In his poem "Great Hymn to the Aten", Akhenaten praises Aten as the creator, and giver of life. The worship of Aten was eradicated by Horemheb.



Overview

The Aten, the sun-disk, is first referred to as a deity in The Story of Sinuhe from the 12th dynasty,^[1] in which the deceased king is described as rising as god to the heavens and uniting *with the sun-disk, the divine body merging with its maker*.^[2] By analogy, the term "silver aten" was sometimes used to refer to the moon.^[3] The solar Aten was extensively worshipped as a god in the reign of Amenhotep III, when it was depicted as a falcon-headed man much like Ra. In the reign of Amenhotep III's successor, Amenhotep IV, the Aten became the central god of Egyptian state religion, and Amenhotep IV changed his name to Akhenaten to reflect his close link with the new supreme deity.^[1]

The full title of Akhenaten's god was "The Ra-Horus who rejoices in the horizon, in his/her Name of the Light which is seen in the sun disc." (This is the title of the god as it appears on the numerous stelae which were placed to mark the boundaries of Akhenaten's new capital at Akhetaten, modern Amarna.) This lengthy name was often shortened to *Ra-Horus-Aten* or just *Aten* in many texts, but the god of Akhenaten raised to supremacy is considered a synthesis of very ancient gods viewed in a new and different way. The god is also considered to be both masculine and feminine simultaneously. All creation was thought to emanate from the god and to exist within the god. In particular, the god was not depicted in anthropomorphic (human) form, but as rays of light extending from the sun's disk.

Furthermore, the god's name came to be written within a cartouche, along with the titles normally given to a Pharaoh, another break with ancient tradition. Ra-Horus, more usually referred to as *Ra-Horakhty* (*Ra, who is Horus of the two horizons*), is a synthesis of two other gods, both of which are attested from very early on. During the Amarna period, this synthesis was seen as the invisible source of energy of the sun god, of which the visible manifestation was the Aten, the solar disk. Thus Ra-Horus-Aten was a development of old ideas which came gradually. The real change, as some see it, was the apparent abandonment of all other gods, especially Amun, and the debatable introduction of monotheism by Akhenaten.^[4] The syncretism is readily apparent in the Great Hymn to

the Aten in which Re-Herakhty, Shu and Aten are merged into the creator god.^[5] Others see Akhenaten as a practitioner of an Aten monolatry,^[6] as he did not actively deny the existence of other gods; he simply refrained from worshipping any but the Aten.

Royal Titulary

During the Amarna Period, the Aten was given a Royal Titulary (as he was considered to be king of all), with his names drawn in a cartouche. There were two forms of this title, the first had the names of other gods, and the second later one which was more 'singular' and referred only to the Aten himself. The early form has Re-Horakhti who rejoices in the Horizon, in his name Shu which is the Aten. The later form has Re, ruler of the two horizons who rejoices in the Horizon, in his name of light which is the Aten.

Variant translations

- High relief and low relief illustrations of the Aten show it with a curved surface (see for example the photograph illustrating this article), therefore, the late scholar Hugh Nibley insisted that a more correct translation would be globe, orb or sphere, rather than disk. The three-dimensional spherical shape of the Aten is even more evident when such reliefs are viewed in person, rather than merely in photographs.
- There is a possibility that Aten's three-dimensional spherical shape depicts an eye of Horus/Ra. In the other early monotheistic religion Zoroastrianism the sun is called Ahura Mazda's eye.
- These two theories are compatible with each other, since an eye is an orb.

Variant vocalizations

Egyptologists have vocalized the word variously as Aten, Aton, Atonu, and Itn.

Names derived from Aten

- Akhenaten: "Effective spirit of the Aten."
- Akhetaten: "Horizon of the Aten," Akhenaten's capital. The archaeological site is known as Amarna.



Pharaoh Akhenaten and his family adoring the Aten, second from the left is Meritaten who was the daughter of Akhenaten.

- Ankhesenpaaten: "Her life is of the Aten."
- Beketaten: "Handmaid of the Aten."
- Meritaten: "She who is beloved of the Aten."
- Meketaten: "Behold the Aten" or "Protected by Aten."
- Neferneferuaten: "The most beautiful one of Aten."



Small Temple of the Aten at Akhetaten

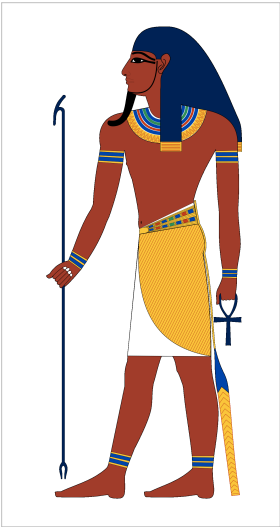
- Paatenemheb: "The Aten on jubilee. Wikipedia: Please clarify"
- Tutankhaten: "Living image of the Aten." Original name of Tutankhamun.

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Atum

Atum



Atum, finisher of the world

God of creation

Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Heliopolis
Consort	Iusaas ^[1]

Atum (/ɑ-tum/), sometimes rendered as **Atem** or **Tem**, is an important deity in Egyptian mythology.

Name

Atum's name is thought to be derived from the word *tem* which means to complete or finish. Thus he has been interpreted as being the 'complete one' and also the finisher of the world, which he returns to watery chaos at the end of the creative cycle. As creator he was seen as the underlying substance of the world, the deities and all things being made of his flesh or alternatively being his ka.^[2]

Origins

Atum is one of the most important and frequently mentioned deities from earliest times, as evidenced by his prominence in the Pyramid Texts, where he is portrayed as both a creator and father to the king.^[2]

Role

In the Heliopolitan creation myth, Atum was considered to be the first god, having created himself, sitting on a mound (benben) (or identified with the mound itself), from the primordial waters (Nu).^[3] Early myths state that Atum created the god Shu and goddess Tefnut by spitting them out of his mouth.^[4]

In the Old Kingdom the Egyptians believed that Atum lifted the dead king's soul from his pyramid to the starry heavens.^[5] He was also a solar deity, associated with the primary sun god Ra. Atum was linked specifically with the evening sun, while Ra or the closely linked god Khepri were connected with the sun at morning and midday.^[6]

In the Book of the Dead, which was still current in the Graeco-Roman period, the sun god Atum is said to have ascended from chaos-waters with the appearance of a snake, the animal renewing itself every morning.^{[7][8][9]}

Atum is the god of pre-existence and post-existence. In the binary solar cycle, the serpentine Atum is contrasted with the ram-headed scarab Khepri—the young sun god, whose name is derived from the Egyptian *hpr* "to come into existence". Khepri-Atum encompassed sunrise and sunset, thus reflecting the entire solar cycle.^[10]

Relationship to other gods

Atum was a self-created deity, the first being to emerge from the darkness and endless watery abyss that girdled the world before creation. A product of the energy and matter contained in this chaos, he created divine and human beings through loneliness: alone in the universe, he produced from his own sneeze, or in some accounts, semen, Shu, the god of air, and Tefnut, the goddess of moisture. The brother and sister, and husband and wife curious about the primeval waters that surrounded them went to explore the waters and disappeared into the darkness. Unable to bear his loss, Atum sent a fiery messenger to find his children. The tears of joy he shed on their return were the first human beings.^[11]

Iconography

He is usually depicted as a man wearing either the royal head-cloth or the dual white and red crown of Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt, reinforcing his connection with kingship. Sometimes he also is shown as a serpent, the form which he returns to at the end of the creative cycle, and also occasionally as a mongoose, lion, bull, lizard, or ape.^[12]

Worship

Atum's cult centered on the city of Heliopolis (Egyptian: *Annu*).^[12]

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- [10] Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible (<http://books.google.com/books?id=yCkRz5pfxz0C&pg=PA123#v=onepage&q&f=false>) 2nd edition, 1999, p. 123
- [11] Pinch, Geraldine (2004). *Egyptian Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Goddesses, and Traditions of Ancient Egypt*. Oxford University Press. pp. 63–64

External links

- Atum - Archaeowiki.org (<http://www.archaeowiki.org/Atum>)

Ba-Pef

Ba-Pef was a minor underworld god in Egyptian mythology. The name literally means *that Ba*, meaning *that soul* (ba).

Ba-Pef is commonly portrayed as an obscure malevolent deity known from the Old Kingdom. During the Old and Middle Kingdom the priesthood of Bapef was held by queens.^{[1][2]}

According to references among the Pyramid Texts he had a cult following and was associated in some way with pain or spiritual anguish affecting the pharaoh.^[*citation needed*]

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- ↑ Wolfgang Helck, Eberhard Otto, Wolfhart Westendorf, Stele-Zypresse, Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1986, p 394
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Babi (mythology)

In Egyptian mythology, **Babi**, also **Baba**,^{[1][2]} was the deification of the baboon, one of the animals present in Egypt. His name is usually translated as *Bull of the baboons*, and roughly means *Alpha male of all baboons*, i.e. chief of the baboons.^[] Since Baboons exhibit many human characteristics, it was believed in early times, at least since the Predynastic Period, that they were deceased ancestors. In particular, the *alpha males* were identified as deceased rulers, referred to as the *great white one* (**Hez-ur** in Egyptian), since Hamadryas baboon (the species prevalent in Egypt) *alpha males* have a notable light grey streak. For example, Narmer is depicted in some images as having transformed into a baboon.

Since baboons were considered to be the dead, Babi was viewed as an underworld deity. Baboons are extremely aggressive, and omnivorous, and so Babi was viewed as being very bloodthirsty, and living on entrails.^{[][3]} Consequently, he was viewed as devouring the souls of the unrighteous after they had been weighed against Ma'at (the concept of truth/order),^[4] and was thus said to stand by a lake of fire, representing destruction. Since this judging of righteousness was an important part of the underworld, Babi was said to be the first-born son of Osiris,^[5] the god of the dead in the same regions in which people believed in Babi.

Baboons also have noticeably high sex drives, in addition to their high level of genital marking, and so Babi was considered the god of virility of the dead. He was usually portrayed with an erection, and due to the association with the judging of souls, was sometimes depicted as using it as the mast of the ferry which conveyed the righteous to Aaru, a series of islands.^[] Babi was also prayed to, in order to ensure that an individual would not suffer from impotence after death.

References

Banebdjedet

Banebdjedet^[1]
in hieroglyphs

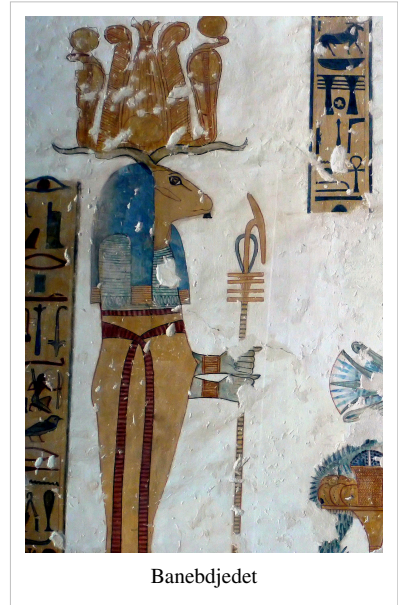
Banebdjedet (Banebdjed) was an Ancient Egyptian ram god with a cult centre at Mendes. Khnum was the equivalent god in Upper Egypt. His wife was the goddess Hatmehit ("Foremost of the Fishes") who was perhaps the original deity of Mendes.^[2] Their offspring was "Horus the Child" and they formed the so called "Mendesian Triad".^[3]

The words for "ram" and "soul" sounded the same in Egyptian so ram deities were at times regarded as appearances of other gods.^[2]

Typically Banebdjedet was depicted with four rams' heads to represent the four Ba's of the sun god. He may also be linked to the first four gods to rule over Egypt (Osiris, Geb, Shu and Ra-Atum), with large granite shrines to each in the Mendes sanctuary.^[2]

The *Book of the Heavenly Cow* describes the "Ram of Mendes" as being the *Ba* of Osiris but this was not an exclusive association. A story dated to the New Kingdom describes him as being consulted by the "Divine Tribunal" to judge between Horus and Seth but he proposes that Neith do it instead as an act of diplomacy. As the dispute continues it is Banebdjedet who suggests that Seth be given the throne as he is the elder brother.^[2]

In a chapel in the Ramesseum, a stela records how the god Ptah took the form of Banebdjedet, in view of his virility, in order to have union with the woman who would conceive Rameses II. It was the sexual connotations associated with his cult that led early Christians to demonise Banebdjedet.^[2]



Banebdjedet

Notes

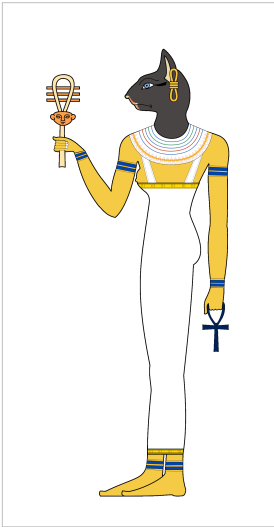
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Bastet

Bastet



Bastet the goddess of cats

Bastet the Goddess of Cats, Lower Egypt, the sun and the moon	
Name in hieroglyphs	Unicode: 𐦩𐦏𐦩
Major cult center	Bubastis
Symbol	the cat, woman with cat as an head, the sistrum
Consort	Ptah
Parents	Ra
Siblings	Tefnut, Shu, Serget, Sekhmet (in some occasions), Hathor (in some occasions)
Offspring	Maahes

Bast refers to a cat goddess of ancient Egyptian religion who was worshipped as early as the Second Dynasty (2890 BC). She was the goddess of warfare in Lower Egypt, the Nile River delta region, before unification of the cultures that became Ancient Egypt. Her name also is spelled **Baast**, **Ubasti**, and **Baset**.^[1]

The two cultures that united had deities that shared similar roles and usually the same imagery. In Upper Egypt Sekhmet was the parallel warrior lioness deity to Bast. Often similar deities merged into one with the unification, but that did not occur with these deities with such strong roots in their cultures, instead these goddesses began to diverge. During the twenty-second dynasty c.945-715 BC, Bast worship had changed from being a lioness warrior deity into being a major protector deity represented as a cat.^[2] **Bastet**, the name associated with this later identity, is the name commonly used by scholars today to refer to this deity.

Name

Bastet, the form of the name which is most commonly adopted by Egyptologists today because of its use in later dynasties, is a modern convention offering one possible reconstruction. In early Egyptian, her name appears to have been 𓆎𓆎𓆎𓆎. In Egyptian writing, the second 𓆎 marks a feminine ending, but was not usually pronounced, and the aleph 𓆎 may have moved to a position before the accented syllable, as witnessed by the Aramaic spelling 𐤁𐤁𐤕𐤕.^[3] By the first millennium, then, 𓆎𓆎𓆎𓆎 would have been something like ***Ubaste** (< ***Ubastat**) in Egyptian speech, later becoming Coptic *Oubaste*.^[3]

During later dynasties, Bast was assigned a lesser role in the pantheon bearing the name Bastet, but retained. During the eighteenth dynasty Thebes became the capital of Ancient Egypt. As they rose to great power the priests of the temple of Amun, dedicated to the primary local deity, advanced the stature of their titular deity to national prominence and shifted the relative stature of others in the Egyptian pantheon. Diminishing her status, they began referring to Bast with the added suffix, as "Bastet" and their use of the new name was well documented, becoming very familiar to researchers. by the twenty-second dynasty the transition had occurred in all regions.

The town of Bast's cult (see below) was known in Greek as *Boubastis* (Βούβαστις). The Hebrew rendering of the name for this town is *Pî-beset* ("House of Bastet"), spelled without *Vortonsilbe*.^[3]

What the name of the goddess means remains uncertain.^[3] One recent suggestion by Stephen Quirke (*Ancient Egyptian Religion*) explains it as meaning "She of the ointment jar". This ties in with the observation that her name was written with the hieroglyph "ointment jar" (𓆎𓆎𓆎) and that she was associated with protective ointments, among other things.^[3]

She was the goddess of protection against contagious diseases and evil spirits.^[4]

She is also known as The Eye of Ra.

From lioness-goddess to cat-goddess

From the third millennium BC, when Bast begins to appear in our record, she is depicted as either a fierce lioness or a woman with the head of a lioness.^[5] Images of Bast were created from a local stone, named alabaster today.^[citation needed] The lioness was the fiercest hunter among the animals in Africa, hunting in cooperative groups of related females.

Originally she was viewed as the protector goddess of Lower Egypt. As protector, she was seen as defender of the pharaoh, and consequently of the later chief male deity, Ra, who was also a solar deity, gaining her the titles *Lady of Flame* and *Eye of Ra*.

Her role in the Egyptian pantheon became diminished as Sekhmet, a similar lioness war deity, became more dominant in the unified culture of Lower and Upper Egypt known as the *Two Lands*.^[citation needed]

In the first millennium BC, when domesticated cats were popularly kept as pets, during the eighteenth dynasty Bastet began to be represented as a woman with the head of a cat and ultimately, by the twenty-second dynasty emerged as the Egyptian cat-goddess *par excellence*.^[5] In the Middle Kingdom, the domestic cat appeared as Bast's sacred animal and after the New Kingdom she was depicted as a woman with the head of a cat or a lioness, carrying a sacred rattle and a box or basket.^[6]

Bubastis

Bast was a local deity whose cult was centred in the city of Bubastis, now Tell Basta, which lay in the Delta near what is known as Zagazig today.^{[5][6]} The town, known in Egyptian as *pr-bꜣstt* (also transliterated as Per-Bast), carries her name, literally meaning "House of Bast". It was known in Greek as *Boubastis* (Βούβαστις) and translated into Hebrew as *Pî-beset*. In the biblical Book of Ezekiel 30:17, the town appears in the Hebrew form Pibeseth.^[5]

Temple

Herodotus, a Greek historian who travelled in Egypt in the fifth century BC, describes Bast's temple at some length:

"Save for the entrance, it stands on an island; two separate channels approach it from the Nile, and after coming up to the entry of the temple, they run round it on opposite sides; each of them a hundred feet wide, and overshadowed by trees. The temple is in the midst of the city, the whole circuit of which commands a view down into it; for the city's level has been raised, but that of the temple has been left as it was from the first, so that it can be seen into from without. A stone wall, carven with figures, runs round it; within is a grove of very tall trees growing round a great shrine, wherein is the image of the goddess; the temple is a square, each side measuring a furlong. A road, paved with stone, of about three furlongs' length leads to the entrance, running eastward through the market place, towards the temple of Hermes; this road is about four hundred feet wide, and bordered by trees reaching to heaven."^[7]

The description offered by Herodotus and several Egyptian texts suggest that water surrounded the temple on three (out of four) sides, forming a type of lake known as *isheru*, not too dissimilar from that surrounding the Temple of the mother goddess Mut in Karnak at Thebes.^[5] Lakes known as *isheru* were typical of temples devoted to a number of leonine goddesses who are said to represent one original goddess, daughter of the Sun-God Re / Eye of Re: Bast, Mut, Tefnut, Hathor, and Sakhmet.^[5] Each of them had to be appeased by a specific set of rituals.^[5] One myth relates that a lioness, fiery and wrathful, was once cooled down by the water of the lake, transformed into a gentle cat, and settled in the temple.^[5]

Festival

Herodotus also relates that of the many solemn festivals held in Egypt, the most important and most popular one was that celebrated in Bubastis in honour of the goddess, whom he calls Bubastis and equates with the Greek goddess Artemis.^{[8][9]} Each year on the day of her festival, the town is said to have attracted some 700,000 visitors ("as the people of the place say"), both men and women (but not children), who arrived in numerous crowded ships. The women engaged in music, song, and dance on their way to the place, great sacrifices were made and prodigious amounts of wine were drunk, more than was the case throughout the year.^[10] This accords well with Egyptian sources which prescribe that leonine goddesses are to be appeased with the "feasts of drunkenness".^[3]

The goddess Bast was sometimes depicted holding a ceremonial sistrum in one hand and an aegis in the other—the aegis usually resembling a collar or gorget embellished with a lioness head.

Bast was a lioness goddess of the sun throughout most of Ancient Egyptian history, but later when she was changed into a cat goddess (Bastet). She also was changed to a goddess of the moon by Greeks occupying Ancient Egypt toward the end of its civilization. In Greek mythology, Bast also is known as *Ailuros*.

History and connection to other deities

The lioness represented the war goddess and protector of both lands that would unite as Ancient Egypt. As divine mother, and more especially as protector, for Lower Egypt, Bast became strongly associated with Wadjet, the patron goddess of Lower Egypt. She eventually became **Wadjet-Bast**, paralleling the similar pair of patron (Nekhbet) and lioness protector (Sekhmet) for Upper Egypt. Bast fought an evil snake named Apep.

As the fierce lion god Maahes of nearby Nubia later became part of Egyptian mythology and assigned the role of the son of Bast, during the time of the New Kingdom, Bast was held to be the daughter of Amun Ra, a newly ascending deity in the Egyptian pantheon during that late dynasty. Bast became identified as his mother in the Lower Egypt, near the delta. Similarly the fierce lioness war goddess Sekhmet, became identified as the mother of Maashes in the Upper Egypt.

Cats in ancient Egypt were revered highly, partly due to their ability to combat vermin such as mice, rats - which threatened key food supplies -, and snakes, especially cobras. Cats of royalty were, in some instances, known to be dressed in golden jewelry and were allowed to eat from their owners' plates. Turner and Bateson estimate that during the twenty-second dynasty c.945-715 BC, Bast worship changed from being a lioness deity into being a major cat deity.^[2] With the unification of the two Egypts, many similar deities were merged into one or the other, the significance of Bast and Sekhmet, to the regional cultures that merged, resulted in a retention of both, necessitating a change to one or the other.

The Ancient Egyptian pantheon was evolving constantly. During the eighteenth dynasty Thebes became the capital of Ancient Egypt and because of that, their patron deity became paramount. The priests of the temple of Amun shifted the relative stature of other deities in the Egyptian pantheon. Diminishing the status of Bast, they began referring to her with the added suffix, as "Bastet" and their use of the new name became very familiar to Egyptologists.

In the temple at Per-Bast some cats were found to have been mummified and buried, many next to their owners. More than 300,000 mummified cats were discovered when Bast's temple at Per-Bast was excavated. The main source of information about the Bast cult comes from Herodotus who visited Bubastis around 450 BC during after the changes in the cult. He equated Bastet with the Greek Goddess Artemis. He wrote extensively about the cult. Turner and Bateson suggest that the status of the cat was roughly equivalent to that of the cow in modern India. The death of a cat might leave a family in great mourning and those who could would have them embalmed or buried in cat cemeteries - pointing to the great prevalence of the cult of Bastet. Extensive burials of cat remains were found not only at Bubastis, but also at Beni Hasan and Saqqara. In 1888, a farmer uncovered a plot of many hundreds of thousands of cats in Beni Hasan.^[2]



Wadjet-Bast, with a lioness head of Bast, the solar disk, and the cobra that represents Wadjet

Later perception

Later scribes sometimes renamed her *Bastet*, a variation on *Bast* consisting of an additional feminine suffix to the one already present (the "t" of Bast), thought to have been added to emphasize pronunciation; perhaps it is a diminutive name applied as she receded in the ascendancy of Sekhmet in the Egyptian pantheon. Since *Bast* literally meant, (*female*) of the ointment jar,^[citation needed] Her name was related with the lavish jars in which Egyptians stored their perfume.

Bast thus gradually became regarded as the goddess of perfumes, earning the title, *perfumed protector*. In connection with this, when Anubis became the god of embalming, Bast, as goddess of ointment, came to be regarded as his wife. The association of Bast as mother of Anubis, was broken years later when Anubis became identified as the son of Nephthys.

Lower Egypt's loss in the wars between Upper and Lower Egypt led to a decrease in the ferocity of Bast. Thus, by the Middle Kingdom she came to be regarded as a domestic cat rather than a lioness. Occasionally, however, she was depicted holding a lioness mask, hinting at her potential ferocity and perhaps, a reminder of her origin.

Because domestic cats tend to be tender and protective of their offspring, Bast also was regarded as a good mother, and she was sometimes depicted with numerous kittens. Consequently, a woman who wanted children sometimes wore an amulet showing the goddess with kittens, the number of which indicated her own desired number of children.

Eventually, her position as patron and protector of Lower Egypt led to her being identified with the more substantial goddess Mut, whose cult had risen to power with that of Amun, and eventually being syncretized with her as *Mut-Wadjet-Bast*. Shortly after, in the constantly evolving pantheon, Mut also absorbed the identities of the Sekhmet-Nekhbet pairing as well.

This merging of identities of similar goddesses has led to considerable confusion, leading to some attributing to Bast the title *Mistress of the Sistrum* (more properly belonging to Hathor, who had become thought of as an aspect of the later emerging Isis, as had Mut), and the Greek idea of her as a lunar goddess (more properly an attribute of Mut) rather than the solar deity she was. The native Egyptian rulers were replaced by Greeks during an occupation of Egypt in a dynasty that lasted almost five hundred years.

These new rulers adopted many Egyptian beliefs and customs, but always "interpreted" them in relation to their Greek culture. These associations sought to link the antiquity of Egyptian culture to the newer Greek culture, thereby lending parallel roots and a sense of continuity. Indeed, much confusion occurred with subsequent generations; the identity of Bast slowly merged among the Greeks during their occupation of Egypt, who sometimes named her **Ailuros** (Greek for *cat*), thinking of Bast as a version of Artemis, their own moon goddess.

Thus, to fit their own cosmology, to the Greeks Bast is thought of as the sister of Horus, whom they identified as Apollo (Artemis' brother), and consequently, the daughter of the later emerging deities, Isis and Ra. Roman occupation of Egypt followed in 30 BC, and their pantheon of deities also was identified with the Greek interpretations of the Ancient Egyptians. The introduction of Christianity and Muslim beliefs followed as well, and by the sixth century AD only a few vestiges of Ancient Egyptian religious beliefs remained, although the cult of Isis had spread to the ends of the Roman Empire.



In popular culture

Bast is a recurring character portrayed in various works by Neil Gaiman, including *The Sandman* and *American Gods*.

Bast is a recurring character in *The Kane Chronicles* trilogy by Rick Riordan. The goddess guards the house in which the protagonists Carter and Sadie reside, and serves the role of their protector.

Bubastis is the name of the genetically engineered Lynx companion of the main antagonist of the graphic novel *Watchmen*.

Bastet is a playable character in the Multiplayer online battle arena, SMITE. Bastet is a melee assassin and is nicknamed the Goddess of Cat.^[11]

Bastet was a featured cursed Egyptian artifact in the 1998 CBS TV series "Early Edition" in season 2 episode 15 titled "Mums the Word".

Bastet was shown in *The Three Lives of Thomasina* as a cat deity who ruled over the souls of all cats who had outlived their nine lives.

In the 1995 television series *Aladdin*, Mirage is one of Aladdin's recurring enemies.

In an episode of *The West Wing*, "The Stackhouse Filibuster", C. J. Cregg believes that characters have been cursed by the goddess because she had broken a small ceramic Bastet statue gifted to the president one year earlier in Cairo.

The werecats from *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* are called Bastet.

Notes

- [1] Badawi, Cherine. *Footprint Egypt*. Footprint Travel Guides, 2004.
- [2] Serpell, "Domestication and History of the Cat", p. 184.
- [3] Te Velde, "Bastet", p. 165.
- [4] <http://www.shira.net/egypt-goddess.htm#Bastet>
- [5] Te Velde, "Bastet", p. 164.
- [6] Bastet (<http://www.egyptianmuseum.gov.eg/bastet.html>) Egyptian Museum
- [7] Herodotus, Book 2, chapter 138.
- [8] Herodotus, Book 2, chapter 59.
- [9] Herodotus, Book 2, chapter 137.
- [10] Herodotus, Book 2, chapter 60.
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External links

- Exhaustive scholarly essay on the goddess (<http://www.per-bast.org/>)
- "Temple to cat god found in Egypt" (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8468803.stm), BBC News.

Bat (goddess)

Bat was a cow goddess in Egyptian mythology depicted as a human face with cow ears and horns. By the time of the Middle Kingdom, her identity and attributes were subsumed within the goddess Hathor.^[1]

Worship

The worship of Bat dates to earliest times and may have its origins in Late Paleolithic cattle herding. Bat was the chief goddess of Seshesh, otherwise known as Hu or Diospolis Parva, the 7th nome of Upper Egypt.



The ancient Egyptian goddess Bat as she appears on the Narmer Palette.



The Narmer Palette, one of the earliest palette artifacts from Egypt, where Bat flanks the top of both sides and on the obverse is at the bottom as well

Name

The epithet Bat may be linked to the word *ba* with the feminine suffix 't'. A person's *ba* roughly equates to his or her personality or emanation and is often translated as 'soul'. The word can also be read as 'power' or 'god'.

Depictions in ancient Egyptian culture

Although it was rare for Bat to be clearly depicted in painting or sculpture, some notable artifacts (like the upper portions of the Narmer Palette) include depictions of the goddess in bovine form. In other instances she was pictured as a celestial bovine creature surrounded by stars or as a human woman. More commonly, Bat was depicted on amulets, with a human face, but with bovine features, such as the ears of a cow and the inward-curving horns of the type of cattle first herded by the Egyptians.

Bat became strongly associated with the sistrum, and the center of her cult was known as the 'Mansion of the Sistrum'.^[2] The sistrum is a musical instrument, shaped like an ankh,^[1] that was one of the most frequently

used sacred instruments in ancient Egyptian temples. Some instruments would include depictions of Bat, with her head and neck as the handle and base and rattles placed between her horns. The imagery is repeated on each side, having two faces, as mentioned in the Pyramid Texts:.

I am Praise; I am Majesty; I am Bat with Her Two Faces; I am the One Who Is Saved, and I have saved myself from all things evil.^[3]



Both Hathor (left) and Bat flank Menkaure in this fourth Dynasty triad statue. The goddesses provide the authority for him to be king and are identified by their crowns. The emblem on Bat's crown represents the sistrum, though the crown also includes her zoomorphic face and the feather of Ma'at. - *Cairo Museum*

Relation to Hathor



Predynastic Naqada fertility figurine holding her arms in a fashion that resembles the inward curving horns of Bat [4][5][6]

The imagery of Bat as a divine cow was remarkably similar to that of Hathor, a parallel goddess from Lower Egypt. In two dimensional images, both goddesses often are depicted straight on, facing the onlooker and not in profile in accordance with the usual Egyptian convention. The significant difference in their depictions is that Bat's horns curve *inward* and Hathor's curve *outward* slightly. It is possible that this could be based in the different breeds of cattle herded at different times.

Hathor's cult center was in the 6th Nome of Upper Egypt, adjacent to the 7th where Bat was the cow goddess, which may indicate that they were once the same goddess in Predynastic Egypt. By the Middle Kingdom, the cult of Hathor had again absorbed that of Bat in a manner similar to other mergers in the Egyptian pantheon.

In popular culture

In the second season of the HBO series *True Blood*, a statue similar to Naqada depictions of Bat is used as a sacred depiction of Dionysus for the maenad Maryann Forrester's orgiastic cult. Sam Merlotte's attraction to the statue upon first meeting Maryann causes her to see him as the perfect sacrifice for her ritual to bring Dionysus

to life, a major driving force for the season's plot.

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- [2] Hart, George. *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, p. 47 2nd Edition Routledge. 2005. ISBN 0-415-34495-6
- [3] R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Oxford 1969, p. 181, Utterance 506
- [4] (http://www.world-science.net/exclusives/exclusives-nfrm/051217_egypt1.htm)
- [5] (<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/egypt/archaeology/sites/naqada.htm>)
- [6] (<http://www.homestead.com/wysinger/neolithic.html>)

External links

- The goddess Bat - discussion on Philae (<http://209.85.135.104/search?q=cache:UyWEDKm1Yl4J:www.philae.nu/akhet/FirstGods.html+Bat+goddess+Egypt&hl=de&ct=clnk&cd=4&gl=de>)
- The goddess Bat - discussion on Egyptian Myths (<http://209.85.135.104/search?q=cache:w79VS2GFBJoJ:www.egyptianmyths.net/bat.htm+Bat+Egypt&hl=de&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=de>)

Bata (god)

Bata from Saka is an Egyptian bull-god of the New Kingdom, who represents together with Anubis the 17th Upper Egyptian Nome.

History

Until the middle of the Eighteenth Dynasty Bata was represented as a ram and later as a bull. Bata is probably identical with the death god *Bt* of the Egyptian Old Kingdom, known from the Saqqara necropolis, for instance from the Mastaba of Ti. Bata is not mentioned in the Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts.

In literature

Bata is the name of the protagonist in the *Tale of Two Brothers*, a copy of which survives on the New Kingdom Papyrus D'Orbiney, where he is the brother of Anubis. He is also mentioned in the Ptolemaic Papyrus Jumilhac.

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External links

- Tale of Two Brothers ^[1]

References

- [1] http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/texts/anpu_and_bata.htm
-

Bes

Part of the myth series on	
Fertile Crescent	
 *Mesopotamian mythology • Ancient Arabian mythology • Ancient Levantine mythology	
Pre-Judaic Arabian gods	
• Abgal • Aglibol • Allah • Al-Qaum • al-Lāt, al-'Ilāhat • Astarte • Atargatis (Syrian) • Atarsamain • Beelshamen • Bēl, Baʿl, Bēl-Šamīn • Bes (Egypto-Arabic) • Dhu'l-Halasa • Dusares, Dhu Sharā' • Ēl, Ilāh (NW Semitic) • Hubal • Ištar, Athtar • Malakbel	• Manāt • Manaf • Nabū, Nebo • Nasr • Nergal • Nuha • Orotalt • Ruda • Shams, Samas • Sīn, Nanna-Suen • Suwa' • Theandrios • ʿUzzā • Wadd • Ya'uq • Yaghūth • Yarhibol/Malakbel • Yatha • <i>demons</i>

Bes (/bɛs/; also spelled as Bisu) is an Ancient Egyptian deity worshipped as a protector of households, and in particular, of mothers and children and childbirth. Bes later came to be regarded as the defender of everything good and the enemy of all that is bad. While past studies identified Bes as a Middle Kingdom import from Nubia, more recent research indicates that he was present in Egypt since the start of Old Kingdom. Mentions of Bes can be traced to pre-dynastic Nile Valley cultures; however his cult did not become widespread until the beginning of the New Kingdom.

Iconography

Modern scholars such as James Romano claim that in its earliest inception, Bes was a representation of a lion rearing up on its hind legs.^[1]

After the Third Intermediate Period, Bes is often seen as just the head or the face, often worn as amulets. The god Bes came from the Great Lakes Region of Africa, coming from the Twa people (a pygmy group) in Congo or Rwanda. The ancient Twa were about the same height as the depictions of Bes.

Dawn Prince-Hughes lists Bes as fitting with other archetypal long-haired Bigfoot-like ape-man figures from ancient Northern Africa, "a squat, bandy-legged figure depicted with fur about his body, a prominent brow, and short, pug nose."^[2]

Worship

Images of the deity were kept in homes and he was depicted quite differently from the other gods. Normally Egyptian gods were shown in profile, but instead Bes appeared in portrait, ithyphallic, and sometimes in a soldier's tunic, so as to appear ready to launch an attack on any approaching evil. He scared away demons from houses, so his statue was put up as a protector.

Bes was a household protector, throughout ancient Egyptian history becoming responsible for such varied tasks as killing snakes, fighting off evil spirits, watching after children, and aiding (by fighting off evil spirits) women in labour (and thus present with Taweret at births).

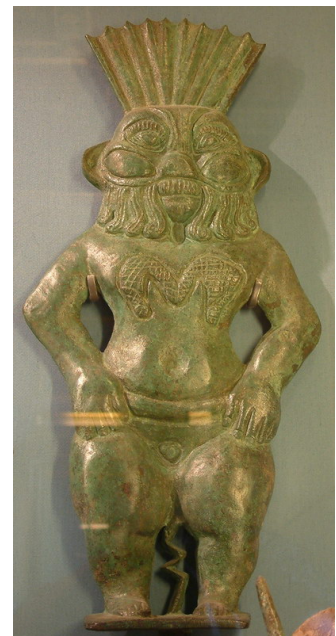
Since he drove off evil, Bes also came to symbolize the good things in life - music, dance, and sexual pleasure. Later, in the Ptolemaic period of Egyptian history, chambers were constructed, painted with images of Bes and his wife Beset, thought by Egyptologists to have been for the purpose of curing fertility problems or general healing rituals.

Many instances of Bes masks and costumes from the New Kingdom and later have been uncovered. These show considerable wear, thought to be too great for occasional use at festivals, and are therefore thought to have been used by professional performers, or given out for rent.

In the New Kingdom, tattoos of Bes could be found on the thighs of dancers, musicians and servant girls.



Bes relief at the Dendera Temple,
Egypt

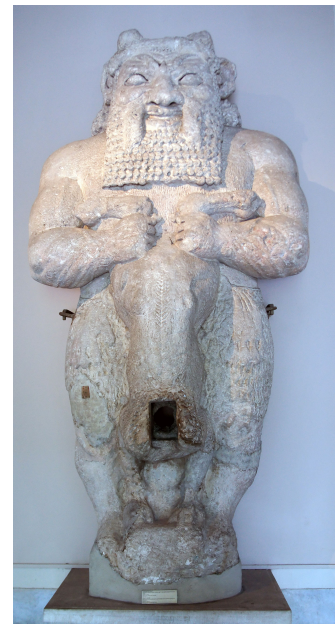


Bes statue from Egypt in the Musée
du Louvre, Paris

Like many Egyptian gods, the worship of Bes was exported overseas, and he, in particular, proved popular with the Phoenicians and the ancient Cypriots.

The cult of Saint Bessus in northern Italy may represent the Christianization of the cult associated with Bes; St. Bessus was also invoked for fertility, and Bessus and Bes are both associated with an ostrich feather in their iconography.^[1]

The Balearic island of Ibiza derives its actual name from this God, brought along with the first Phoenician settlers 654 BC. These settlers, amazed at the lack of any sort of venomous creatures on the island thought it to be the island of Bes (<אִי־בֶשֶׁם> ʾyḇšm *ʾibošim). Later Romans called it Ebusus.



Bes statue from Amanthus (Cyprus) in the Istanbul Archaeological Museums



Mask depicting Bes, early 4th-1st century BC. The Walters Art Museum.

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- [3] <http://www.egyptian-gods.info/2011/03/bes.html>

Buchis

In Egyptian mythology, **Buchis** (also spelt **Bakh**, **Buchis**, and **Bakha**) was the manifestation of the deification of Ka (power/life-force) of the war god Menthu, ^[1] worshipped in the region of Hermonthis.

A wild bull was chosen and said to be the Bukhis incarnation of Menthu, in which role it was worshipped as such. Over time, the criteria for choosing the bull became more rigid, fixing themselves on what had been simply the general appearance of bulls in the region, being a white body and black face.

When these bulls, or their mothers, died, they were mummified, and placed in a special cemetery known as the **Bucheum**. The mothers of these bulls were considered aspects of Hathor, the mother of these deities.

Eventually, the Bakha was identified as a form of the Apis, and consequently became considered an incarnation of Osiris. The last burial of a Buchis bull in the Bucheum at Hermonthis occurred in 340 A.D. ^{[2][3]} The worship of the bull in this form lasted until about 362 AD, when it was destroyed by rising Christianity in the Roman Empire.



A stele commemorating the burial of a Bakha bearing the iconography of Hathor

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- [2] David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance*, Princeton University Press 1998, p.72
- [3] M. W. Daly, Carl F. Petry, *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Cambridge University Press 1998, p.28

External links

- The last funerary stela of a Buchis bull (<http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/texts/bukhis.htm>)
- British Museum page about Buchis (http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/s/sandstone_stela_of_ptolemy_ii.aspx)



Similar image of a bull on the bottom of the obverse of the Narmer Palette from the Predynastic period

Duamutef



Duamutef, son of Horus

Duamutef
in hieroglyphs

Duamutef was one of the Four Sons of Horus^[1] and a protection god of the Canopic jars.^[2] Commonly he is said to be the son of the god *Horus the Elder* (Heru-ur) and the goddess Isis. There is another myth that describes Duamutef and his brothers as sons of Osiris. According to this myth they were born from a lily flower that arose from the primeval ocean.

The name Duamutef means "Who adores his mother".

Portrayal

First Duamutef was represented as a human wrapped in mummy bandages. From the New Kingdom he is shown with the head of a jackal.^[3] In some cases his appearance is confused or exchanged with that of Qebehsenuef so he has the head of a falcon and Qebehsenuef has the head of a jackal.

Duamutef usually was depicted on coffins and as the lid of canopic jars. Many images of the *Judgement of the Dead* show him together with his brothers in front of Osiris on a small lily flower.

Meaning as Protection God of Canopic Jars

Together with the three other sons of Horus Imsety, Hapi and Qebehsenuef he protected the mummified internal organs. His duty was to protect the stomach.^[4] His protector is the goddess Neith.^[5]

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- [5] Duamutef: Alternate name[s] (<http://www2.si.umich.edu/chico/mummy/Afterlife/Gods/Godstextx.html>): Tuamutef; Golden Dawn, Thmoomathph]

Eye of Ra

The **Eye of Ra** or **Eye of Re** is a being in ancient Egyptian mythology that functions as a feminine counterpart to the sun god Ra and a violent force that subdues his enemies. The Eye is an extension of Ra's power, equated with the disk of the sun, but it also behaves as an independent entity, which can be personified by a wide variety of Egyptian goddesses, including Hathor, Sekhmet, Bastet, Wadjet, and Mut. The Eye goddess acts as mother, sibling, consort, and daughter of the sun god. She is his partner in the creative cycle in which he begets the renewed form of himself that is born at dawn. The Eye's violent aspect defends Ra against the agents of disorder that threaten his rule. This dangerous aspect of the Eye goddess is often represented by a lioness or by the uraeus, or cobra, a symbol of protection and royal authority. As an apotropaic power, the Eye is often equated with the Eye of Horus, which in other cases is a separate concept.



The Eye of Ra could be equated with the disk of the sun, with the cobras coiled around the disk, and with the white and red crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt.

The Eye of Ra was involved in many areas of ancient Egyptian religion, including in the cults of the many goddesses who are equated with it. Its life-giving power was celebrated in temple rituals, and its dangerous aspect was invoked in the protection of the pharaoh, of sacred places, and of ordinary people and their homes.

Roles

Solar

The Egyptians often referred to the sun and the moon as the "eye"s of particular gods. The right eye of the god Horus, for instance, was equated with the sun, and his left eye equated with the moon. At times the Egyptians called the lunar eye the "Eye of Horus", a concept with its own complex mythology and symbolism, and called the solar eye the "Eye of Ra"—Ra being the preeminent sun god in ancient Egyptian religion. However, in Egyptian belief, many terms and concepts are fluid, so the sun could also be called the "Eye of Horus".^[1]

The yellow or red disk-like sun emblem in Egyptian art represents the Eye of Ra. Because of the great importance of the sun in Egyptian religion, this emblem is among the most common religious symbols in all of Egyptian art.^[2] Although Egyptologists usually call this emblem the "sun disk", its convex shape in Egyptian relief sculpture suggests that the Egyptians may have envisioned it as a sphere.^[3] The emblem often appears atop the heads of solar-associated deities, including Ra himself, to indicate their links with the sun. The disk could even be regarded as Ra's physical form.^[2] At other times, the sun god, in various forms, is depicted inside the disk shape as if enclosed within it.^[4] The Egyptians often described the sun's movement across the sky as the movement of a barque carrying Ra and his entourage of other gods, and the sun disk can either be equated with this solar barque or depicted containing the barque inside it.^[3] The disk is often called Ra's "daughter" in Egyptian texts.^[1]

As the sun, the Eye of Ra is a source of heat and light, and it is associated with fire and flames. It is also equated with the red light that appears before sunrise, and with the morning star that precedes and signals the sun's arrival.^[5]

Procreative

The eyes of Egyptian deities, although they are aspects of the power of the gods who own them, sometimes take active roles in mythology, possibly because the word for "eye" in Egyptian, *jrt*, resembles another word meaning "do" or "act". The presence of the feminine suffix *-t* in *jrt* may explain why these independent eyes were thought of as female. The Eye of Ra, in particular, is deeply involved in the sun god's creative actions.^[6]

In Egyptian mythology, the sun's emergence from the horizon each morning is likened to Ra's birth, an event that revitalizes him and the order of the cosmos. Ra emerges from the body of a goddess who represents the sky—usually Nut. Depictions of the rising sun often show Ra as a child contained within the solar disk. In this context, the disk may represent the womb from which he is born or the placenta that emerges with him. The Eye of Ra, therefore, can also take the form of a goddess: the mother who brings Ra forth from her womb or a sister who is born alongside him like a placenta. Ra was sometimes said to enter the body of the sky goddess at sunset, impregnating her and setting the stage for his rebirth at sunrise. Consequently, the Eye, as womb and mother of the child form of Ra, is also the consort of the adult Ra. The adult Ra, likewise, is the father of the Eye who is born at sunrise. The Eye is thus a feminine counterpart to Ra's masculine creative power, part of a broader Egyptian tendency to express creation and renewal in terms of sexual reproduction. Ra gives rise to his daughter, the Eye, who in turn gives rise to him, her son, in a cycle of constant regeneration.^[7]

Ra is not unique in this relationship with the Eye. Other solar gods may interact in a similar way with the numerous goddesses associated with the Eye. Hathor, a goddess of the sky, the sun, and fertility, is often called the Eye of Ra, and she also has a relationship with Horus, who also has solar connections, that is similar to the relationship between Ra and his Eye.^[8] Hathor can even be called "the Eye of Horus"—one of several ways in which the distinctions between the two eyes are blurred.^[1] The Eye can also act as an extension of and companion to Atum, a creator god closely associated with Ra. Sometimes this eye is called the Eye of Atum, although at other times the Eye of Ra and the Eye of Atum are distinct, with Ra's Eye the sun and Atum's Eye the moon.^[9]

A myth about the Eye, known from allusions in the *Coffin Texts* from the Middle Kingdom (c. 2055–1650 BC) and a more complete account in the Bremner-Rhind Papyrus from the Late Period (664–332 BC), demonstrates the Eye's close connection with Ra and Atum and her ability to act independently. The myth takes place before the creation of the world, when the solar creator—either Ra or Atum—is alone. Shu and Tefnut, the children of this creator god, have drifted away from him in the waters of Nu, the chaos that exists before creation in Egyptian belief, so he sends out his Eye to find them. The Eye returns with Shu and Tefnut but is infuriated to see that the creator has developed a new eye, which has taken her place. The creator god appeases her by giving her an exalted position on his forehead in the form of the uraeus, the emblematic cobra that appears frequently in Egyptian art, particularly on royal crowns. The equation of the Eye with the uraeus and the crown underlines the Eye's role as a companion to Ra and to the pharaoh, with whom Ra is linked. Upon the return of Shu and Tefnut, the creator god is said to have shed tears, although whether they are prompted by happiness at his children's return or distress at the Eye's anger is unclear. These tears give rise to the first humans. In a variant of the story, it is the Eye that weeps instead, so the Eye is the progenitor of humankind.^[10]



The uraeus on the royal headdress of Amenemope

The tears of the Eye of Ra are part of a more general connection between the Eye and moisture. In addition to representing the morning star, the Eye can also be equated with the star Sothis (Sirius). Every summer, at the start of the Egyptian year, Sothis' heliacal rising, in which the star rose above the horizon just before the sun itself, heralded the start of the Nile inundation, which watered and fertilized Egypt's farmland. Therefore, the Eye of Ra precedes and represents the floodwaters that restore fertility to all of Egypt.^[11]

Aggressive and protective

The Eye of Ra also represents the destructive aspect of Ra's power: the heat of the sun, which in Egypt can be so harsh that the Egyptians sometimes likened it to arrows shot by a god to destroy evildoers. The uraeus is a logical symbol for this dangerous power. In art, the sun disk image often incorporates one or two uraei coiled around it. The solar uraeus represents the Eye as a dangerous force that encircles the sun god and guards against his enemies, spitting flames like venom.^[12] Four uraei are sometimes said to surround Ra's barque. Collectively called "Hathor of the Four Faces", they represent the Eye's vigilance in all directions.^[13]

Ra's enemies are the forces of chaos, which threaten *maat*, the cosmic order that he creates. They include both humans who spread disorder and cosmic powers like Apep, the embodiment of chaos, whom Ra is said to combat every night.^[14] The malevolent gaze of Apep's own Eye is a potent weapon against Ra, and Ra's Eye is one of the few powers that can counteract it. Some unclear passages in the *Coffin Texts* suggest that Apep was thought capable of injuring or stealing the Eye of Ra from its master during the combat.^[15] In other texts, the Eye's fiery breath assists in Apep's destruction.^[16] This apotropaic function of the Eye of Ra is another point of overlap with the Eye of Horus, which was similarly believed to ward off evil.^[1]

The Eye's aggression may even extend to deities who, unlike Apep, are not regarded as evil. Evidence in early funerary texts suggests that at dawn, Ra was believed to swallow the multitude of other gods, who in this instance are equated with the stars, which vanish at sunrise and reappear at sunset. In doing so, he absorbs the gods' power, thereby renewing his own vitality, before spitting them out again at nightfall. The solar Eye is said to assist in this effort, slaughtering the gods for Ra to eat. The red light of dawn therefore signifies the blood produced by this slaughter.^[17]

In another myth, related in the *Book of the Heavenly Cow* from the New Kingdom (c. 1550–1070 BC), Ra uses the Eye as a weapon against humans who have rebelled against his authority. He sends the Eye—Hathor, in her

aggressive manifestation as the lioness goddess Sekhmet—to massacre them. She does so, but after the first day of her rampage, Ra decides to prevent her from killing all humanity. He orders that beer be dyed red and poured out over the land. The Eye goddess drinks the beer, mistaking it for blood, and in her inebriated state returns to Ra without noticing her intended victims. Through her drunkenness she has been returned to a harmless form.^[18]

The solar Eye's volatile nature can make her difficult even for her master to control. In a third myth, known in several variants, the Eye goddess becomes upset with Ra and runs away from him. In some versions the provocation for her anger seems to be her replacement with a new eye after the search for Shu and Tefnut, but in others her rebellion seems to take place after the world is fully formed. With the solar Eye gone, Ra is vulnerable to his enemies and bereft of a large part of his power. The Eye's absence and Ra's weakened state may be a mythological reference to solar eclipses.^[19]

Meanwhile, the Eye wanders in a distant land—Nubia or Libya—as a wild feline, as dangerous and uncontrolled as the forces of chaos that she is meant to subdue. To restore order, one of the gods goes out to retrieve her. In one fragmentary version, the war god Anhur searches for the Eye, which takes the form of the goddess Menhit, using his skills as a hunter. In other accounts, it is Shu who searches for Tefnut, who in this case represents the Eye rather than an independent deity. In a third version, known from a Late Period papyrus dubbed "The Myth of the Eye of the Sun", Thoth, the messenger and conciliator of the Egyptian pantheon, persuades the goddess to return through a combination of lectures, enticement, and entertaining stories. His efforts are not uniformly successful; at one point, the goddess is so enraged by Thoth's words that she transforms from a relatively benign cat into a fire-breathing lioness, making Thoth jump.^[20]

When the goddess is at last placated, the retrieving god escorts her back to Egypt. Her return marks the beginning of the inundation and the new year. The pacified Eye deity is once more a procreative consort for the sun god, or, in some versions of the story, for the god who brings her back. Menhit becomes the consort of Anhur, Tefnut is paired with Shu, and Thoth's spouse is sometimes Nehemtawy, a minor goddess associated with this pacified form of the Eye.^[20] In many cases, the Eye goddess and her consort then produce a divine child who becomes the new sun god. The goddess' transformation from hostile to peaceful is a key step in the renewal of the sun god and the kingship that he represents.^[21]

Manifestations

The characteristics of the Eye of Ra were an important part of the Egyptian conception of female divinity in general,^[22] and the Eye was equated with many goddesses, ranging from very prominent deities like Hathor to obscure ones like Mestjet, a lion goddess who appears in only one known inscription.^[23]



Sekhmet as a woman with the head of a lioness, wearing the sun disk and uraeus

The Egyptians associated many gods who took felid form with the sun, and many lioness deities, like Sekhmet, Menhit, and Tefnut, were equated with the Eye. Bastet was depicted as both a domestic cat and a lioness, and with these two forms she could represent both the peaceful and violent aspects of the Eye. Yet another goddess of the solar Eye was Mut, the consort of the god Amun, who was associated with Ra. She, too, could appear in both leonine and cat form.^[24]

Likewise, cobra goddesses often represented the Eye. Among them was Wadjet, a tutelary deity of Lower Egypt who was closely associated with royal crowns and the protection of the king.^[25] Other Eye-associated cobra goddesses include the fertility deity Renenutet, the magician goddess Weret-hekau, and Meretseger, the divine protector of the burial grounds near the city of Thebes.^[26]

The deities associated with the Eye were not restricted to feline and serpent forms. Hathor's usual animal form is a cow, as is that of the closely linked Eye goddess Mehet-Weret.^[27] Nekhbet, a vulture goddess, was closely connected with Wadjet, with the Eye, and with

the crowns of Egypt.^[28] Many Eye goddesses appear mainly in human form, including Neith, an arrow-shooting deity sometimes said to be the mother of the sun god,^[29] and Satet and Anuket, who were linked with the Nile cataracts and the inundation.^[30] Other such goddesses include Sothis, the deified form of the star of the same name, and Maat, the personification of cosmic order, who was connected with the Eye because she was said to be the daughter of Ra.^[31] Even Isis, who is usually the companion of Osiris rather than Ra,^[32] or Astarte, a deity of fertility and warfare who was imported from Canaan rather than native to Egypt, could be equated with the solar Eye.^[33]

Frequently, two Eye-related goddesses appear together, representing different aspects of the Eye. The juxtaposed deities often stand for the procreative and aggressive sides of the Eye's character,^[34] as Hathor and Sekhmet sometimes do.^[35] Wadjet and Nekhbet can stand for Lower and Upper Egypt, respectively, along with the Red Crown and White Crown that represent the two lands. Similarly, Mut, whose main cult center was in Thebes, sometimes served as an Upper Egyptian counterpart of Sekhmet, who was worshipped in Memphis in Lower Egypt.^[36]

These goddesses and their iconographies frequently mingled. Many combinations such as Hathor-Tefnut,^[37] Mut-Sekhmet,^[28] and Bastet-Sothis appear in Egyptian texts.^[38] Wadjet could sometimes be depicted with a lion head rather than that of a cobra, Nekhbet could take on cobra form as a counterpart of Wadjet, and a great many of these goddesses wore the sun disk on their heads, sometimes with the addition of a uraeus or the cow horns from Hathor's typical headdress.^[39] Beginning in the Middle Kingdom, the hieroglyph for a uraeus could be used as a logogram or determinative for the word "goddess" in any context, because virtually any goddess could be linked with the Eye's complex set of attributes.^[13]

Worship

The Eye of Ra was invoked in many areas of Egyptian religion, and its mythology was incorporated into the worship of many of the goddesses identified with it. In the Ptolemaic Period, the new year and the Nile flood that came along with it were celebrated as the return of the Eye after her wanderings in foreign lands. The Egyptians built shrines along the river containing images of animals and dwarfs rejoicing at the goddess' arrival.^[40] At the temple of Montu at Medamud, it was Montu's consort Raettawy who was equated with Hathor and the Eye of Ra. Her arrival on the new year, in fertile, moisture-bearing form, set the stage for her subsequent marriage to Montu and the birth of their mythological child. The temple's new year festival celebrated her homecoming with drinking and dancing, paralleling the goddess' inebriated state after her pacification.^[41] In other cities, two goddesses were worshipped as the belligerent and peaceful forms of the Eye, as with Ayet and Nehemtawy at Herakleopolis or Satet and Anuket at Aswan.^[34] In another temple ritual, the pharaoh played a ceremonial game in honor of the Eye goddesses Hathor, Sekhmet, or Tefnut, in which he struck a ball symbolizing the Eye of Apep with a club made from a type of wood that was said to have sprung from the Eye of Ra. The ritual represents, in a playful form, the battle of Ra's Eye with its greatest foe.^[42]

The concept of the solar Eye as mother, consort, and daughter of a god was incorporated into royal ideology. Pharaohs took on the role of Ra, and their consorts were associated with the Eye and the goddesses equated with it. The sun disks and uraei that were incorporated into queens' headdresses during the New Kingdom reflect this mythological tie. The priestesses who acted as ceremonial "wives" of particular gods during the Third Intermediate Period, such as the God's Wife of Amun, had a similar relationship with the gods they served.^[43]



Frieze of uraei at the pyramid complex of Djoser

The violent form of the Eye was also invoked in religious ritual and symbolism as an agent of protection. The uraeus on royal and divine headdresses alludes to the role of the Eye goddesses as protectors of gods and kings.^[44] For similar reasons, uraei appear in rows atop shrines and other structures, surrounding and symbolically guarding them against hostile powers. Many temple rituals called upon Eye goddesses to defend the temple precinct or the resident deity. Often, the texts of such rituals specifically mention a set of four defensive uraei. These uraei are sometimes identified with various combinations of goddesses associated with the Eye, but in all cases they are also manifestations of "Hathor of the Four Faces", whose protection of the solar barque is extended in these rituals to specific places on earth.^[45]

The Eye of Ra could also be invoked to defend ordinary people. Some apotropaic amulets in the shape of the Eye of Horus bear the figure of a goddess on one side. These amulets are most likely an allusion to the connection between the Eye of Horus and the Eye of Ra, invoking their power for personal protection.^[46] In addition, certain magical spells from the New Kingdom involve the placement of clay model uraei around a house or a room, invoking the protection of the solar uraeus as in the temple rituals. These uraei are intended to ward off evil spirits and the nightmares that they were believed to cause, or other enemies of the house's occupant.^[47] The spell says the models have "fire in their mouths". Models like those in the spells have been found in the remains of ancient Egyptian towns, and they include bowls in front of their mouths where fuel could be burnt, although the known examples do not show signs of burning.^[48] Whether literal or metaphorical, the fire in the cobras' mouths, like the flames spat by the Eye of Ra, was meant to dispel the nocturnal darkness and burn the dangerous beings that move within it.^[49]

The Eye's importance extends to the afterlife as well. Egyptian funerary texts associate deceased souls with Ra in his nightly travels through the Duat, the realm of the dead, and with his rebirth at dawn. In these texts the Eye and its various manifestations often appear, protecting and giving birth to the deceased as they do for Ra.^[50] A spell in the *Coffin Texts* states that Bastet, as the Eye, illuminates the Duat like a torch, allowing the deceased to pass safely

through its depths.^[51]

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- [3] Lesko, in Shafer 1991, p. 118
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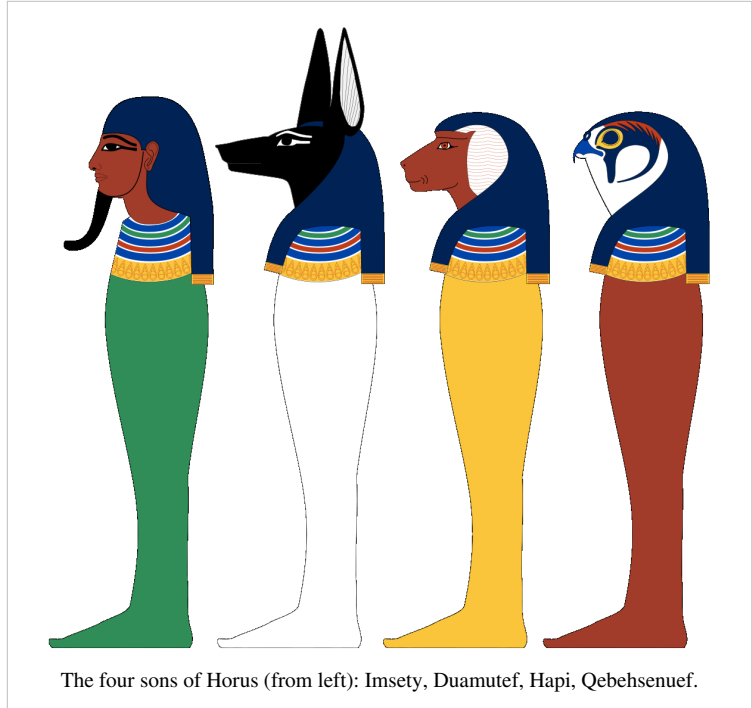
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Four sons of Horus

One of the four sons of Horus was Hapi.

The **four sons of Horus** were a group of four gods in Egyptian religion, who were essentially the personifications of the four canopic jars, which accompanied mummified bodies.^[1] Since the heart was thought to embody the soul, it was left inside the body.^[2] The brain was thought only to be the origin of mucus, so it was reduced to liquid, removed with metal hooks, and discarded.^[3] This left the stomach (and small intestines), liver, large intestines, and lungs, which were removed, embalmed and stored, each organ in its own jar. There were times when embalmers deviated from this scheme: during the 21st Dynasty they embalmed and wrapped the viscera and returned them to the body, while the Canopic jars remained empty symbols.^[11]



The four sons of Horus (from left): Imsety, Duamutef, Hapi, Qebehsenuef.

The earliest reference to the sons of Horus is found in the Pyramid Texts^[4] where they are described as friends of the king, as they assist the king in his ascension to heaven in the eastern sky by means of ladders.^[5] Their association with Horus specifically goes back to the Old Kingdom when they were said not only to be his children but also his souls. As the king, or Pharaoh was seen as a manifestation of, or especially protected by, Horus, these *parts* of the deceased pharaoh, referred to as the Osiris, were seen as *parts* of Horus, or rather, his *children*,^[6] an association that did not diminish with each successive pharaoh.

Since Horus was their father, so Isis, Horus's original wife in the early mythological phase, was usually seen as their mother,^[7] though in the details of the funerary ritual each son, and therefore each canopic jar, was protected by a particular goddess. Just as the sons of Horus protected the contents of a canopic jar, the king's organs, so they in turn were protected. As they were male in accordance with the principles of male/female duality their protectors were female.

- Imsety in human form, protected the liver and was protected by Isis.
- Hapi in baboon form, protected the lungs and was protected by Nephthys.
- Duamutef in jackal form, protected the stomach and was protected by Neith.
- Qebehsenuef in hawk form, protected the large intestines and was protected by Serket.^{[8][9]}

The classic depiction of the four sons of Horus on Middle Kingdom coffins show Imsety and Duamutef on the eastern side of the coffin and Hapi and Qebehsenuef on the western side. The eastern side is decorated with a pair of eyes and the mummy was turned on its side to face the east and the rising sun; therefore, this side is sometimes referred to as the front. The sons of Horus also became associated with the cardinal compass points, so that Hapi was the north, Imsety the south, Duamutef the east and Qebehsenuef the west.^[10]

Until the end of the 18th Dynasty the canopic jars had the head of the king, but later they were shown with animal heads.^[2] Inscriptions on coffins and sarcophagi from earliest times showed them usually in animal form.

Hapi

Hapi in hieroglyphs

Hapi (xapi) the baboon headed son of Horus protected the lungs of the deceased and was in turn protected by the goddess Nephthys.^[11] The spelling of his name includes a hieroglyph which is thought to be connected with steering a boat, although its exact nature is not known. For this reason he was sometimes connected with navigation, although early references call him the great runner: "You are the great runner; come, that you may join up my father N and not be far in this your name of Hapi, for you are the greatest of my children – so says Horus"^[12]

In Spell 151 of the Book of the Dead Hapi is given the following words to say: "I have come to be your protection. I have bound your head and your limbs for you. I have smitten your enemies beneath you for you, and given you your head, eternally."^[13]

Spell 148 in the Book of the Dead directly associates all four of Horus's sons, described as the four pillars of Shu and one of the four rudders of heaven, with the four cardinal points of the compass. Hapi was associated with the north.^[14]

Imsety

Imsety in hieroglyphs
--

Imsety the human headed son of Horus, protected the liver of the deceased and was in turn protected by the goddess Isis.^[11] It seems that his role was to help revivify the corpse of the dead person, as he is asked to lift them up by Horus: "You have come to N; betake yourself beneath him and lift him up, do not be far from him, (even) N, in your name of Imsety."^[12]

To stand up meant to be active and thus alive while to be prone signified death. In Spell 151 of the Book of the Dead Imsety is given the following words to say: "I am your son, Osiris, I have come to be your protection. I have strengthened your house enduringly. As Ptah decreed in accordance with what Ra himself decrees."^[13] Again the theme of making alive and revivifying is alluded to through the metaphor of making his house flourish. He does this with the authority of two creator gods Ptah and Ra (or Re).

Spell 148 in the Book of the Dead directly associates all four of Horus's sons to the four cardinal points. Imsety was associated with the south.^[14]

Duamutef

Duamutef in hieroglyphs



Duamutef, son of Horus

Duamutef, the jackal headed son of Horus, protected the stomach of the deceased and was in turn protected by the goddess Neith.^[11] It seems that his role was to worship the dead person, and his name means literally "he who worships his mother". In the Coffin Texts Horus calls upon him, "Come and worship my father N for me, just as you went that you might worship my mother Isis in your name Duamutef."^[12]

Isis had a dual role. Not only was she the wife of Osiris and the mother of Horus, but she was also the consort of Horus the Elder and thus the mother of the sons of Horus. This ambiguity is added to when Duamutef calls Osiris, rather than Horus his father, although kinship terms were used very loosely, and "father" can be used as "ancestor" and "son" as "descendant".^[15] In Spell 151 of the Book of the Dead Duamutef is given the following words to say: "I have come to rescue my father Osiris from his assailant ."^[13]

The text does not make it clear who might assail Osiris, although there are two major candidates. The obvious one is Set, the murderer of Osiris.^[16] Somehow the son who worships his mother Isis is able to assist in overcoming Set. The other possibility is Apophis, the serpent demon who prevents the Sun's passage and thus the resurrection of Osiris.^[17] Either way, Duamutef through his worship of Isis has the power to protect the deceased from harm.

Duamutef was also considered one of the four pillars of Shu, a rudder of heaven, and was associated with the east.^[14]

Qebehsenuef

Qebehsenuef in hieroglyphs

Qebehsenuef was the falcon-headed son of Horus, and protected the intestines of the deceased. He was in turn protected by the goddess Serket.^[11] It appears that his role was to refresh the dead person, and his name means literally "he who libates his siblings". Horus commands him, "Come refresh my father; betake yourself to him in your name of Qebehsenuef. You have come that you may make coolness for him after you ..."^[12]

Libation or showering with cool water was a traditional form of worship in Ancient Egypt. There are many images of the pharaoh presenting libation to the gods. There is a sense of a dual function of cleansing and refreshing them.

After Set murdered Osiris he cut the body into pieces and scattered them around the Delta.^[16] This was anathema to the Egyptians and the service that Qebehsenuef gives to the dead is to reassemble their parts so they can be properly preserved. In Spell 151 of the Book of the Dead he is given the following words to say: "I am your son, Osiris, I have come to be your protection. I have united your bones for you, I have assembled your limbs for you. have brought you your heart, and placed it for you at its place in your body."^[13]

Qebehsenuef was the god associated with the west.^[14]

Baboon, Jackal, Falcon and Human

The reasons for attributing these four animals to the sons of Horus is not known, although we may point to other associations which these animals have in Egyptian mythology. The baboon is associated with the moon and Thoth, the god of wisdom and knowledge, and also the baboons which chatter when the sun rises raising their hands as if in worship.^[18] The jackal (or possibly dog) is linked to Anubis and the act of embalming and also Wepwawet the "opener of the ways" who seeks out the paths of the dead.^[19] The hawk is associated with Horus himself and also Seker the mummified necropolis god. Imseti, the human, may be linked to Osiris himself or Onuris the hunter.^[20]

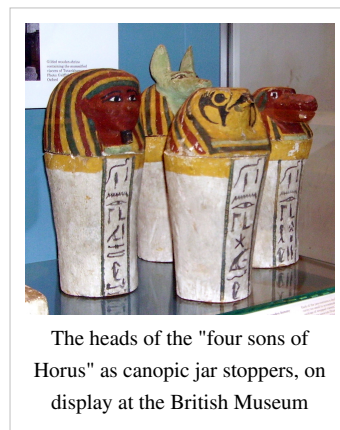
The Egyptians themselves linked them with the ancient kings of Lower and Upper Egypt, the Souls of Pe and Nekhen. In Spells 112 and 113 of the Book of the Dead which have their origins in the earlier Coffin Texts Spells 157 and 158, it is described how Horus has his eye injured, and because of this is given the sons of Horus:

As for Imsety, Hapy, Duamutef, Qebehsenuf, their father is Horus, their mother Isis. And Horus said to Ra, place two brothers in Pe, two brothers in Nekhen from this my troupe, and to be with me assigned for eternity. The land may flourish, the turmoil be quenched. It happened for Horus who is upon his papyrus-column. I know the powers of Pe; it is Horus, it is Imsety, it is Hapy.^[21]

The injury of Horus's eye is part of the myth cycle known as the Contending of Horus and Set recounting how they fought over the crown of Egypt.^[22]

In a unique illustration in the tomb of Ay the sons of Horus are shown wearing the red and white crowns as the Souls of Pe and Nekhen, the souls of the royal ancestors.

The attributes of the sons of Horus are not limited to their role as the protectors of canopic jars. they appear as the four rudders of heaven in Spell 148 of the Book of the Dead, as four of the seven celestial spirits summoned by Anubis in Spell 17 of the Book of the Dead and through this are linked to the circumpolar stars of the Great Bear (or Plough): "The tribunal around Osiris is Imset, Hapy, Duamutef, Qebehsenuf, these are at the back of the Plough constellation of the northern sky."^[23]



The heads of the "four sons of Horus" as canopic jar stoppers, on display at the British Museum

Notes

[1] Aufderheide, p. 258

[2] Germer, p. 462

[3] Germer, pp. 460–461

[4] Assmann, p. 357

[5] Eyma, p. 218

[6] Assmann, p. 467

[7] Griffiths, p. 49

[8] Aufderheide, p. 237

[9] Taylor, pp. 201ff

[10] Lurker, p. 104

[11] O'Connor, p. 121

[12] Faulkner, pp. 520–523

[13] "Book of the Dead, Chapter 151", (<http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/literature/religious/hpres151.html>) *Digital Egypt for Universities*, University College, London, accessed 2 December 2011

[14] Budge, p. 240

[15] Pinch, p. 204

[16] Budge, p. 361

[17] Budge, p. 359

[18] Kummer, p. 4

[19] Malkowski and Schwaller de Lubicz, p. 305

- [20] Hart, p. 113
- [21] "Book of the Dead, Chapter 112", (<http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/literature/religious/hprs112.html>) *Digital Egypt for Universities*, University College, London, accessed 2 December 2011
- [22] Sellers, p. 63
- [23] "Book of the Dead, Chapter 17", (<http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/literature/religious/bd17.html>) *Digital Egypt for Universities*, University College, London, accessed 2 December 2011

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Geb

Geb	
God of the Earth	
Consort	Nut
Parents	Shu and Tefnut
Siblings	Nut

Geb in hieroglyphs

Geb was the Egyptian god of the Earth and a member of the Ennead of Heliopolis. It was believed in ancient Egypt that Geb's laughter were earthquakes and that he allowed crops to grow.

Name

The name was pronounced as such from the Greek period onward and was formerly erroneously read as **Seb**^[1] or as **Keb**. The original Egyptian was perhaps "Gebeb"/"Kebeb". It was spelled with either initial -g- (all periods), or with -k-point (*gj*). The latter initial root consonant occurs once in the Middle Kingdom *Coffin Texts*, more often in 21st Dynasty mythological papyri as well as in a text from the Ptolemaic tomb of Petosiris at Tuna el-Gebel or was written with initial hard -k-, as e.g. in a 30th Dynasty papyrus text in the Brooklyn Museum dealing with descriptions of and remedies against snakes.

Role and development

The oldest representation in a fragmentary relief of the god, was as an anthropomorphic bearded being accompanied by his name, and dating from king Djoser's reign, 3rd Dynasty, and was found in Heliopolis. In later times he could also be depicted as a ram, a bull or a crocodile (the latter in a vignette of the Book of the Dead - papyrus of the lady Heryweben in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo).

Frequently described mythologically as father of snakes (one of the names for snake was *s3-t3* - 'son of the earth' and in a Coffin Texts-spell Geb was described as father of the snake Nehebkau, while his mother was in that case Neith) and therefore depicted sometimes as such. In mythology Geb also often occurs as a primeval divine king of Egypt from whom his son Osiris and his grandson Horus inherited the land after many contentings with the disruptive god Set, brother and killer of Osiris. Geb could also be regarded as personified fertile earth and barren desert, the latter containing the dead or setting them free from their tombs, metaphorically described as 'Geb opening his jaws', or imprisoning those there not worthy to go to the fertile North-Eastern heavenly *Field of Reeds*. In the latter case, one of his otherworldly attributes was an ominous jackal-headed stave (called *wsr.t*) rising from the ground unto which enemies could be bound. In the Heliopolitan *Ennead* (a group of nine gods created in the beginning by the one god Atum or Ra), Geb is the husband of Nut, the sky or visible daytime and nightly firmament, the son of the earlier primordial elements Tefnut (moisture) and Shu ('emptiness'), and the father to the four lesser gods of the system - Osiris, Seth, Isis and Nephthys. In this context, Geb was believed to have originally been engaged in eternal sex with Nut, and had to be separated from her by Shu, god of the air.^[2] Consequently, in mythological depictions, Geb was shown as a man reclining, sometimes with his phallus still pointed towards Nut. As time progressed, the deity became more associated with the habitable land of Egypt and also as one of its early rulers. As a chthonic deity he (like Min) became naturally associated with the underworld and with vegetation -barley being said to grow upon his ribs- and was depicted with plants and other green patches on his body.

His association with vegetation, and sometimes with the underworld and royalty brought Geb the occasional interpretation that he was the husband of Renenutet, a minor goddess of the harvest and also mythological caretaker (the meaning of her name is 'nursing snake') of the young king in the shape of a cobra, who herself could also be regarded as the mother of Nehebkau, a primeval snake god associated with the underworld. He is also equated by classical authors as the Greek Titan Cronus.

Goose

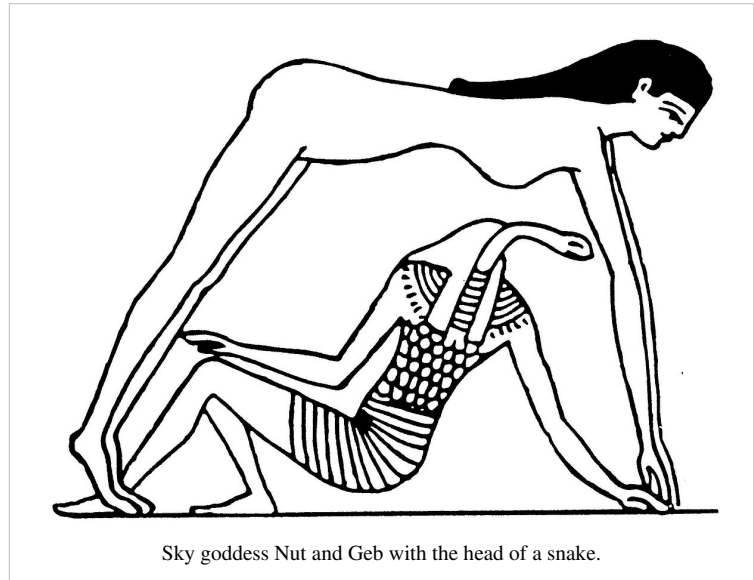
Some Egyptologists, (specifically Jan Bergman, Terence Duquesne or Richard H. Wilkinson) have stated that Geb was associated with a mythological divine creator goose who had laid a world egg from which the sun and/or the world had sprung. This theory is assumed to be incorrect and to be a result of confusing the divine name "Geb" with that of a Whitefronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*), also called originally *gb(b)*: 'lame one, stumbler'.^[3]

This bird-sign is used only as a *phonogram* in order to spell the name of the god (H.te Velde, in: *Lexikon der Aegyptologie* II, lemma: Geb). An alternative ancient name

for this goose species was *trp* meaning similarly 'walk like a drunk', 'stumbler'. The Whitefronted Goose is never found as a cultic symbol or holy bird of Geb. The mythological creator 'goose' referred to above, was called *Ngg wr* 'Great Honker' and always depicted as a Nilegoose/Foxgoose (*Alopochen aegyptiacus*) who ornithologically belongs to a separate genus and whose Egyptian name was *smn*, Coptic *smon*. A coloured vignette irrefutably depicts a Nile Goose with an opened beak (*Ngg wr!*) in a context of solar creation on a mythological papyrus dating from the 21st Dynasty.^[4]

Similar images of this divine bird are to be found on temple walls (Karnak, Deir el-Bahari), showing a scene of the king standing on a papyrus raft and ritually plucking papyrus for the Theban god Amun-Re-Kamutef. The latter Theban creator god could be embodied in a Nilegoose, but never in a Whitefronted Goose. In Underworld Books a diacritic goose-sign (most probably denoting then an *Anser albifrons*) was sometimes depicted on top of the head of a standing anonymous male anthropomorphic deity, pointing to Geb's identity. Geb himself was never depicted as a Nile Goose, as later was Amun, called on some New Kingdom stelae explicitly: 'Amun, the beautiful *smn*-goose (Nile Goose)'.^[5]

The only clear pictorial confusion between the hieroglyphs of a Whitefronted Goose (in the normal hieroglyphic spelling of the name Geb, often followed by the additional -b-sign) and a Nile Goose in the spelling of the name Geb occurs in the rock cut tomb of the provincial governor Sarenput II (12th Dynasty, Middle Kingdom) on the Qubba el-Hawa desert-ridge (opposite Aswan), namely on the left (southern) wall near the open doorway, in the first line of the brightly painted funerary offering formula. This confusion is to be compared with the frequent hacking out by Ekhнатon's agents of the sign of the Pintail Duck (meaning 'son') in the royal title 'Son of Re', especially in Theban temples, where they confused the duck sign with that of a Nilegoose regarded as a form of the then forbidden god Amon.^[6]



Sky goddess Nut and Geb with the head of a snake.

Notes

- [1] cf. E.A.Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians. Studies in Egyptian Mythology* (London, 1904; republ.Dover Publications, New York, 1969)
- [2] Meskell, Lynn *Archaeologies of social life: age, sex, class et cetera in ancient Egypt* Wiley Blackwell (20 Oct 1999) ISBN 978-0-631-21299-7 p.103
- [3] C.Wolterman, "On the Names of Birds and Hieroglyphic Sign-List G 22, G 35 and H 3" in: "Jaarbericht van het Voorazatisch-Egyptisch genootschap Ex Oriente Lux" no.32 (1991-1992)(Leiden, 1993), p.122, note 8
- [4] text: drs. Carles Wolterman, Amstelveen, Holland
- [5] text: drs. Carles Wolterman, Amstelveen, Holland
- [6] text: drs. Carles Wolterman, Amstelveen, Holland

Ha (mythology)

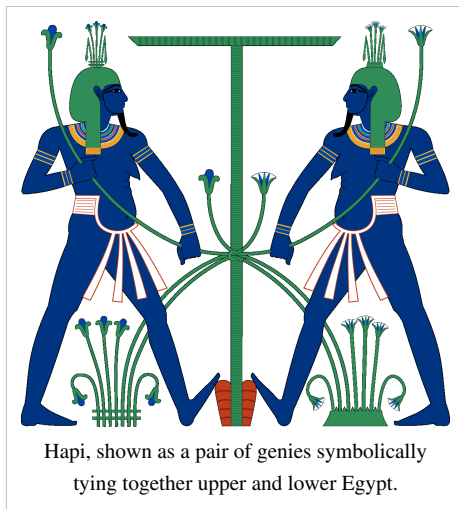
In Egyptian mythology, **Ha** was a god of the deserts to the west of Egypt. He was associated with the underworld (Duat) and pictured as a man wearing the symbol for desert hills on his head. Ha was said to protect Egypt from enemies such as invading tribes from Libya.^[1]

The dinosaur *Hagryphus* ("Ha's griffin") was named after Ha; it was discovered in Utah and Ha's association with "the Western Desert" was carried over to the New World.^[2]

References

- [1] Wilkinson, Richard H. (2003). *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. Thames & Hudson. p. 106
- [2] Zanno, L. E. and Sampson, S. D. 2005. A new oviraptorosaur (Theropoda; Maniraptora) from the Late Cretaceous (Campanian) of Utah. *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology* 25 (4):897–904, December 2005

Hapi (Nile god)



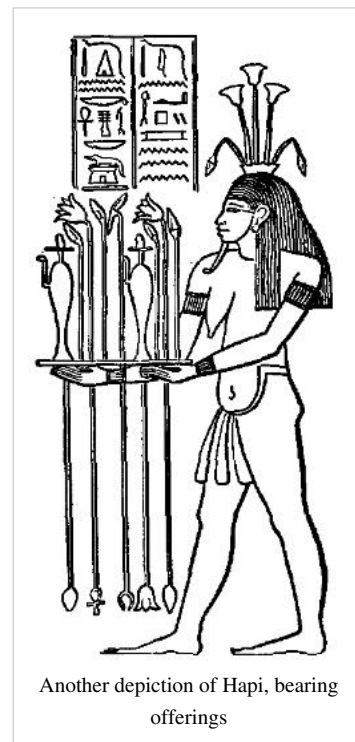
Hapi
in hieroglyphs

Hapi was the god of the annual flooding of the Nile in ancient Egyptian religion. The flood deposited rich silt on the river's banks, allowing the Egyptians to grow crops.^[1] Some of the titles of Hapi were, *Lord of the Fishes and Birds of the Marshes* and *Lord of the River Bringing Vegetation*. He is typically depicted as a man with a large belly wearing a loincloth, having long hair and having pendulous, female-like breasts.^[2]

Mythology

The annual flooding of the Nile occasionally was said to be the *Arrival of Hapi*.^[1] Since this flooding provided fertile soil in an area that was otherwise desert, Hapi, as its patron, symbolised fertility. Due to his fertile nature he was sometimes considered the "father of the gods",^[1] and was considered to be a caring father who helped to maintain the balance of the cosmos, the world or universe regarded as an orderly, harmonious system.^[1] He was thought to live within a cavern at the supposed source of the Nile near Aswan.^[3] The cult of Hapi was mainly located at the First Cataract named Elephantine. His priests were involved in rituals to ensure the steady levels of flow required from the annual flood. At Elephantine the official nilometer, a measuring device, was carefully monitored to predict the level of the flood, and his priests must have been intimately concerned with its monitoring.

It may be the case that originally, *Hapi* (or a variation on it), was an earlier name used for the Nile itself, since it was said (inaccurately) that the Nile began between *Mu-Hapi* and *Kher-Hapi*, at the southern edge of Egypt where the two tributaries entered the region.^[citation needed] Nevertheless Hapi was not regarded as the god of the Nile itself but of the inundation event.^[1] He was also considered a "friend of Geb" the Egyptian god of the earth,^[4] and the "lord of Neper", the god of grain.^[5]



Another depiction of Hapi, bearing offerings

Iconography

Although male and wearing the false beard, Hapi was pictured with pendulous breasts and a large belly, as representations of the fertility of the Nile. He also was usually given blue^[2] or green skin, representing water. Other attributes varied, depending upon the region of Egypt in which the depictions exist. In Lower Egypt, he was adorned with papyrus plants and attended by frogs, present in the region, and symbols of it. Whereas in Upper Egypt, it was the lotus and crocodiles which were more present in the Nile, thus these were the symbols of the region, and those associated with Hapi there. Hapi often was pictured carrying offerings of food or pouring water from an amphora, but also, very rarely, was depicted as a hippopotamus. During the Nineteenth dynasty Hapi is often depicted as a pair of figures, each holding and tying together the long stem of two plants representing Upper and Lower Egypt, symbolically binding the two halves of the country around a hieroglyph meaning "union".^[2] This symbolic representation was often carved at the base of seated statues of the pharaoh.^[2]

Hymn

The *Hymn to the Flood* says:

Lightmaker who comes from the dark

Fattener of herds

Might that fashions all

None can live without him

People are clothed with the flax of his fields

Thou makest all the land to drink unceasingly, as thou descendest on thy way from the heavens.

References

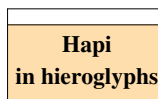
- [1] Wilkinson, p.106
- [2] Wilkinson, p.107
- [3] Wilkinson, p.108
- [4] Wilkinson, p.105
- [5] Wilkinson, p.117
- Wilkinson, Richard H. (2003). *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. Thames & Hudson. ISBN 0-500-05120-8.

External links

- Hapi, God of the Nile, Fertility, the North and South (<http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/hapi.html>)
- Egyptian God - Hapi: Father of the gods (<http://www.egyptartsite.com/hapi.html>)
- Ancient Egypt: The Mythology - Hapi (<http://www.egyptianmyths.net/hapi.htm>)

Hapi (Son of Horus)

*This article is about the funerary deity. **Hapi** can also refer to Hapi, a Nile god, or Hapi-anekh, bull deity of Memphis.*



Hapi, sometimes transliterated as **Hapy**, is one of the Four sons of Horus in ancient Egyptian religion, depicted in funerary literature as protecting the throne of Osiris in the Underworld. He is not to be confused with another god of the same name. He is commonly depicted with the head of a hamadryas baboon, and is tasked with protecting the lungs of the deceased, hence the common depiction of a hamadryas baboon head sculpted as the lid of the canopic jar that held the lungs. Hapi is in turn protected by the goddess Nephthys.^[1] When his image appears on the side of a coffin, he is usually aligned with the side intended to face north.^[2] When embalming practices changed during the Third Intermediate Period and the mummified organs were placed back inside the body, an amulet of Hapi would be included in the body cavity.^[2]

The spelling of his name includes a hieroglyph which is thought to be connected with steering a boat, although its exact nature is not known. For this reason he was sometimes connected with navigation, although early references call him the great runner, as below from Spell 521 of the Coffin Texts.

“You are the great runner; come, that you may join up my father N and not be far in this your name of Hapi, for you are the greatest of my children - so says Horus”^[3]

In Spell 151 of the Book of the Dead he is given the following words to say:

“I have come that I may be your protection, O N; I have knit together your head and your members, I have smitten your enemies beneath you, and I have given you your head forever.”^[4]

As one of the four pillars of Shu and one of the four rudders of heaven he was associated with the North, and is specifically referenced as such in Spell 148 in the Book of the Dead.



Hapi-(lung) Canopic jar of "Lady Senebtisi"

God Hapi is spelled in Egyptian language hieroglyphs:
"h-p-(det.-Rudder)"



God Hapi is spelled:

*"h-(Rudder)-
 p-
 ii-(two reeds)"*



Hapi in the Übersee-Museum

References

- [1] David B. O'Connor, Eric H. Cline, *Amenhotep III: Perspectives on His Reign*, University of Michigan Press 1998, ISBN 0-472-08833-5, p.121.
- [2] Wilkinson, Richard H. *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. p.88 Thames & Hudson. 2003. ISBN 0-500-05120-8
- [3] Raymond Oliver Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, p.521. David Brown Book Company 2004
- [4] Raymond Oliver Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, David Brown Book Company 2004

Hathor

Hathor	
	
The goddess Hathor wearing her headdress, a pair of cow horns with a sun disk.	
Sky-goddess of love, beauty, motherhood, foreign lands, mining, and music.	
Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Dendera
Symbol	the sistrum
Consort	Ra, Horus
Parents	Ra or Ptah
Offspring	Ihy, Horus ^[1]

Hathor (/ˈhæθɔːr/ or /ˈhæθər/; ^[2] Egyptian: *ḥwt-ḥr*, "mansion of Horus")^[1] is an Ancient Egyptian goddess who personified the principles of joy, feminine love, and motherhood.^[3] She was one of the most important and popular deities throughout the history of Ancient Egypt. Hathor was worshiped by Royalty and common people alike in whose tombs she is depicted as "Mistress of the West" welcoming the dead into the next life.^[4] In other roles she was a goddess of music, dance, foreign lands and fertility who helped women in childbirth,^[4] as well as the patron goddess of miners.^[1]

The cult of Hathor predates the historic period, and the roots of devotion to her are therefore difficult to trace, though it may be a development of predynastic cults which venerated fertility, and nature in general, represented by cows.^[5]

Hathor is commonly depicted as a cow goddess with head horns in which is set a sun disk with Uraeus. Twin feathers are also sometimes shown in later periods as well as a menat necklace.^[5] Hathor may be the cow goddess who is depicted from an early date on the Narmer Palette and on a stone urn dating from the 1st dynasty that suggests a role as sky-goddess and a relationship to Horus who, as a sun god, is "housed" in her.^[5]

The Ancient Egyptians viewed reality as multi-layered in which deities who merge for various reasons, while retaining divergent attributes and myths, were not seen as contradictory but complementary.^[6] In a complicated relationship Hathor is at times the mother, daughter and wife of Ra and, like Isis, is at times described as the mother of Horus, and associated with Bast.^[5]

The cult of Osiris promised eternal life to those deemed morally worthy. Originally the justified dead, male or female, became an Osiris but by early Roman times females became identified with Hathor and men with Osiris.^[7]

The Ancient Greeks identified Hathor with the goddess Aphrodite and the Romans as Venus.^[8]

Early depictions



Cow deities appear on the Kings belt and the top of the Narmer Palette

Hathor is ambiguously depicted until the 4th dynasty.^[9] In the historical era Hathor is shown using the imagery of a cow deity. Artifacts from pre-dynastic times depict cow deities using the same symbolism as used in later times for Hathor and Egyptologists speculate that these deities may be one and the same or precursors to Hathor.^[10]

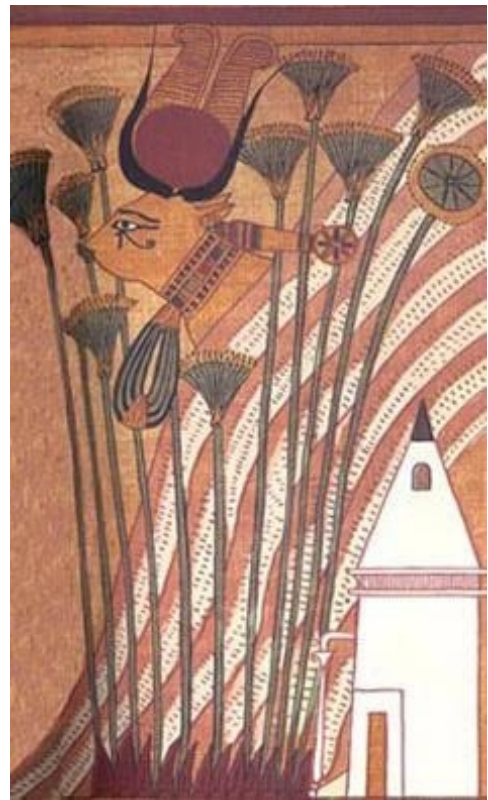
A cow deity appears on the belt of the King on the Narmer Palette dated to the pre-dynastic era, and this may be Hathor or, in another guise, the goddess Bat with whom she is linked and later supplanted. At times they are regarded as one and the same goddess, though likely having separate origins, and reflections of the same divine concept. The evidence pointing to the deity being Hathor in particular is based on a passage from the Pyramid texts which states that the King's apron comes from Hathor.^[11]

A stone urn recovered from Hierakonpolis and dated to the 1st dynasty has on its rim the face of a cow deity with stars on its ears and horns that may relate to Hathor's, or Bat's, role as a sky-goddess.^[5] Another artifact from the 1st dynasty shows a cow lying down on an ivory engraving with the inscription "Hathor in the Marshes" indicating her association with vegetation and the papyrus marsh in particular. From the Old Kingdom she was also called *Lady of the Sycamore* in her capacity as a tree deity.^[5]

Relationships, associations, images, and symbols

Hathor had a complex relationship with Ra. At times she is the eye of Ra and considered his daughter, but she is also considered Ra's mother. She absorbed this role from another cow goddess 'Mht wrt' ("Great flood") who was the mother of Ra in a creation myth and carried him between her horns. As a mother she gave birth to Ra each morning on the eastern horizon and as wife she conceives through union with him each day.^[5]

Hathor, along with the goddess Nut, was associated with the Milky Way during the third millennium B.C. when, during the fall and spring equinoxes, it aligned over and touched the earth where the sun rose and fell.^[12] The four legs of the celestial cow represented Nut or Hathor could, in one account, be seen as the pillars on which the sky was supported with the stars on their bellies constituting the Milky Way on which the solar barque of Ra, representing the sun, sailed.^[13]



Hathor as a cow, wearing her necklace and showing her sacred eye – Papyrus of Ani.



Milky Way seen as it may have appeared to Ancient Egyptians

The Milky Way was seen as a waterway in the heavens, sailed upon by both the sun deity and the moon, leading the ancient Egyptians to describe it as *The Nile in the Sky*.^[14] Due to this, and the name *mehturt*, she was identified as responsible for the yearly inundation of the Nile. Another consequence of this name is that she was seen as a herald of imminent birth, as when the amniotic sac breaks and floods its waters, it is a medical indicator that the child is due to be born extremely soon.

Another interpretation of the Milky Way was that it was the primal snake, Wadjet, the protector of Egypt who was closely associated with Hathor and other early deities among the various aspects of the great mother goddess, including Mut and Naunet. Hathor also was favoured as a protector in desert regions (see Serabit el-Khadim).

Hathor's identity as a cow, perhaps depicted as such on the Narmer Palette, meant that she became identified with another ancient cow-goddess of fertility, Bat. It still remains an unanswered question amongst Egyptologists as to why Bat survived as an independent goddess for so long. Bat was, in some respects, connected to the Ba, an aspect of the soul, and so Hathor gained an association with the afterlife. It was said that, with her motherly character, Hathor greeted the souls of the dead in Duat, and proffered them with refreshments of food and drink. She also was described sometimes as *mistress of the necropolis*.

The assimilation of Bat, who was associated with the sistrum, a musical instrument, brought with it an association with music. In this later form, Hathor's cult became centred in Dendera in Upper Egypt and it was led by priestesses and priests who also were dancers, singers and other entertainers.

Hathor also became associated with the *menat*, the turquoise *musical necklace* often worn by women. A hymn to Hathor says:

*Thou art the Mistress of Jubilation,
the Queen of the Dance, the Mistress
of Music, the Queen of the Harp
Playing, the Lady of the Choral
Dance, the Queen of Wreath Weaving,
the Mistress of Inebriety Without End.*

Essentially, Hathor had become a goddess of joy, and so she was deeply loved by the general population, and truly revered by women, who aspired to embody her multifaceted role as wife, mother, and lover. In this capacity, she gained the titles of *Lady of the House of Jubilation*, and *The One Who Fills the Sanctuary with Joy*. The worship of Hathor was so popular that a lot of festivals were dedicated to her honor than any other Egyptian deity, and more children were named after this goddess than any other deity. Even Hathor's priesthood was unusual, in that both women and men became her priests.



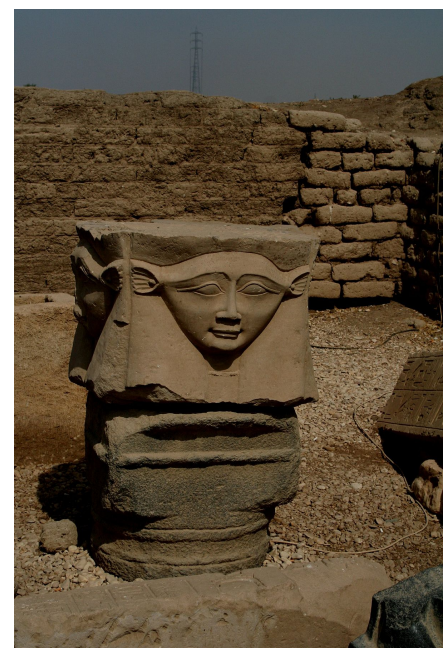
Sculpture of Hathor as a cow, with all of her symbols, the sun disk, the cobra, as well as her necklace and crown.

Temples

As Hathor's cult developed from prehistoric cow cults it is not possible to say conclusively where devotion to her first took place. Dendera in Upper Egypt was a significant early site where she was worshiped as "*Mistress of Dendera*". From the Old Kingdom era she had cult sites in Meir and Kusae with the Giza-Saqqara area perhaps being the centre of devotion. At the start of the first Intermediate period Dendera appears to have become the main cult site where she was considered to be the mother as well as the consort of "*Horus of Edfu*". Deir el-Bahri, on the west bank of Thebes, was also an important site of Hathor that developed from a pre-existing cow cult.^[5]

Temples (and chapels) dedicated to Hathor:

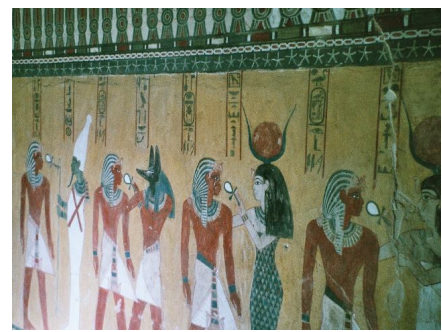
- The Temple of Hathor and Ma'at at Deir el-Medina, West Bank, Luxor.
- The Temple of Hathor at Philae Island, Aswan.
- The Hathor Chapel at the Mortuary Temple of Queen Hatshepsut. West Bank, Luxor.
- The temple of Hathor at Timna valley, Israel



Dendera Temple, showing Hathor on the capitals of a column.

Bloodthirsty warrior

The Middle Kingdom was founded when Upper Egypt's pharaoh, Mentuhotep II, took control over Lower Egypt, which had become independent during the First Intermediate Period, by force. This unification had been achieved by a brutal war that was to last some twenty-eight years with many casualties, but when it ceased, calm returned, and the reign of the next pharaoh, Mentuhotep III, was peaceful, and Egypt once again became prosperous. A tale, (see "*The Book of the Heavenly Cow*"), from the perspective of Lower Egypt, developed around this experience of protracted war. In the tale following the war, Ra (representing the pharaoh of Upper Egypt) was no longer respected by the people (of Lower Egypt) and they ceased to obey his authority.



Hathor among the deities greeting the newly dead pharaoh, Thutmose IV, from his tomb in the Valley of the Kings, Luxor, Egypt.

The myth states that Ra communicated through Hathor's third Eye (Maat) and told her that some people in the land were planning to assassinate him. Hathor was so angry that the people she had created would be audacious enough to plan that she became Sekhmet (war goddess of Upper Egypt) to destroy them. Hathor (as Sekhmet) became bloodthirsty and the slaughter was great because she could not be stopped. As the slaughter continued, Ra saw the chaos down below and decided to stop the blood-thirsty Sekhmet. So he poured huge quantities of blood-coloured beer on the ground to trick Sekhmet. She drank so much of it—thinking it to be blood—that she became drunk and returned to her former gentle self as Hathor.

Hesat

Hesat in hieroglyphs

hs3t

In Egyptian mythology, **Hesat** (also spelt **Hesahet**, and **Hesaret**) was the manifestation of Hathor, the divine sky-cow, in earthly form. Like Hathor, she was seen as the wife of Ra.

Since she was the more earthly cow-goddess, Milk was said to be *the beer of Hesat*. As a dairy cow, Hesat was seen as the wet-nurse of the other gods, the *one who creates all nourishment*. Thus she was pictured as a divine white cow, carrying a tray of food on her horns, with milk flowing from her udders.

In this earthly form, she was, dualistically, said to be the mother of Anubis, the god of the dead, since, it is she, as nourisher, that brings life, and Anubis, as death, that takes it. Since Ra's earthly manifestation was the Mnevis bull, the three of Anubis as son, the Mnevis as father, and Hesat as mother, were identified as a family triad, and worshipped as such.

Nebethetepet

Nebethetepet in hieroglyphs

nb.t htp.t
mistress of the offering

In Egyptian mythology, **Nebethetepet** was the manifestation of Hathor at Heliopolis. She was associated with the sun-god Atum. Her name means *mistress of the offering*.^[15]

Hathor outside the Nile river in Egypt

Hathor was worshipped in Canaan in the eleventh century BC, which at that time was ruled by Egypt, at her holy city of Hazor, or Tel Hazor which the Old Testament claims was destroyed by Joshua (Joshua 11:13, 21).

A major temple to Hathor was constructed by Seti II at the copper mines at Timna in Edomite Seir. Serabit el-Khadim (Arabic: سراييط الخادم) (Arabic, also transliterated Serabit al-Khadim, Serabit el-Khadem) is a locality in the south-west Sinai Peninsula where turquoise was mined extensively in antiquity, mainly by the ancient Egyptians. Archaeological excavation, initially by Sir Flinders Petrie, revealed the ancient mining camps and a long-lived Temple of Hathor. The Greeks, who became rulers of Egypt for three hundred years before the Roman domination in 31 BC, also loved Hathor and equated her with their own goddess of love and beauty, Aphrodite.



Temple to Hathor at Timna.



Temple of
Hathor,
Dendera



Temple of
Hathor,
Dendera



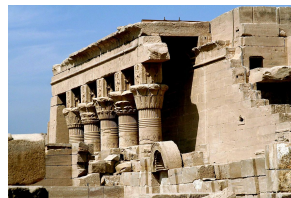
Temple of Hathor, Dendera



Temple of Hathor, Dendera



Temple of Hathor, Dendera



Temple of Hathor, Dendera



Temple of Hathor, Dendera



Bes at the
Temple of
Hathor,
Dendera

Notes

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- [11] *Early Dynastic Egypt: Strategies, Society and Security*, Toby A. H. Wilkinson, p. 283, Routledge, 2001, ISBN 0-415-26011-6
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- [13] *The tree of life: an archaeological study*, E. O. James, p. 66, BRILL, 1967, ISBN 90-04-01612-0
- [14] Changing position of the Milky Way (http://cathygary.com/Astronomy/MilkyWay_Luxor3.html) in Luxor (Thebes), Egypt: 6,500 BCE to 19,300 CE Regular Years and the Precessional Cycle
- [15] George Hart, *The Routledge dictionary of Egyptian gods and goddesses*, Psychology Press, 2005, via Google Books ([http://books.google.com/books?id=yTNxvArA5YIC&lpg=PA12&dq=am-heh god underworld&pg=PA12#v=onepage&q=am-heh god underworld&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=yTNxvArA5YIC&lpg=PA12&dq=am-heh+god+underworld&pg=PA12#v=onepage&q=am-heh+god+underworld&f=false))

External links

- Hathor Article by Caroline Seawright (<http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/hathor.html>)
- Het-Hert site, another name for Hathor (<http://www.hethert.org>)

Hatmehit

Hatmehit in hieroglyphs

Hatmehit, or **Hatmehyt** (reconstructed to have been pronounced *Hāwit-Maḥūyat in Egyptian) in the ancient Egyptian religion was a fish-goddess in the area around the delta city of Per-banebdjedet, Mendes. In ancient Egyptian art Hatmehit was depicted either as a fish, or a woman with a fish emblem or crown on her head. She was a goddess of life and protection.

Name

Her name translates as *Foremost of Fish* or *Chief of Fish*. She may have some connection to Hathor, one of the oldest deities of Egypt who also went by the name *Mehit*, meaning *great flood*. This may possibly be due to being seen as a remnant of the primal waters of creation from which all things arose. Other goddesses associated with the primal waters of creation are Mut and Naunet.

When the cult of Osiris arose, the people of Mendes reacted by identifying Osiris as having achieved his authority by being the husband of Hatmehit. In particular, it was the *Ba* of Osiris, known as Banebjed (literally meaning *Ba of the lord of the djed*, referring to Osiris), which was said to have married Hatmehit.

When Horus became considered the son of Osiris, a form known as *Harpocrates* (*Har-pa-khered* in Egyptian), Hatmehit was consequently said to be his mother. As wife of Osiris, and mother of Horus, she eventually became identified as a form of Isis.

Sources

- Richard Wilkinson: The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt. London, Thames and Hudson, 2003. ISBN 978-0-500-05120-7, p.228–229

External links

- Iconography of Hatmehit (PDF-article) ^[1]

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Hedetet

Hedetet^[1] in hieroglyphs
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Hedetet or **Hedjedjet** (*hdd.t*) is a scorpion goddess of the ancient Egyptian religion. She resembles Serket in many ways, but was in later periods merged into Isis. She was depicted with the head of a scorpion, nursing a baby.^[2] She is mentioned in the Book of the Dead.

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Heh (god)

Huh in hieroglyphs
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In Egyptian mythology, **Heh** (also **Huh**, **Hah**, **Hauh**, **Huah**, **Hahuh**) was the deification of infinity or eternity in the Ogdoad, his name itself meaning "endlessness". His female counterpart was known as **Hauhet**, which is simply the feminine form of his name.

Like the other concepts in the Ogdoad, his male form was often depicted as a frog, or a frog-headed human, and his female form as a snake or snake-headed human. The other common representation depicts him crouching, holding a palm stem in each hand (or just one), sometimes with a palm stem in his hair, as palm stems represented long life to the Egyptians, the years being represented by notches on it. Depictions of this form also had a shen ring at the base of each palm stem, which represented infinity. Depictions of Huh were also used in hieroglyphs to represent one million, which was essentially considered equivalent to infinity in Egyptian mathematics. Thus this deity is also known as the "god of millions of years".

Origins and mythology

The primary meaning of the term *ḥeḥ* was "million" or "millions"; subsequently, a personification of Ḥeḥ was adopted as the Egyptian god of infinity. Together with his female counterpart Ḥauḥet, Ḥeḥ represented a member of the Ogdoad of eight primeval deities whose worship was centred at Hermopolis Magna.

Forms and iconography

The god Ḥeḥ was usually depicted anthropomorphically, as in the hieroglyphic character, as a male figure with divine beard and lappet wig. Normally kneeling (one knee raised), the god typically holds in each hand a notched palm branch. (These were employed in the temples for ceremonial time-keeping, which use explains the use of the palm branch as the hieroglyphic symbol for *ṛnp.t*, "year"). Occasionally, an additional palm branch is worn on the god's head.

Cult and worship

The personified, somewhat abstract god of eternity Ḥeḥ possessed no known cult centre or sanctuary; rather, his veneration revolved around symbolism and personal belief. The god's image and its iconographic elements reflected the wish for millions of years of life or rule; as such, the figure of Ḥeḥ finds frequent representation in amulets, prestige items and royal iconography from the late Old Kingdom period onwards.



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Heka (god)

Heka (/ˈhɛkə/; Egyptian: *Hk3*; also spelt Hike) was the deification of magic in Egyptian mythology, his name being the Egyptian word for "magic". According to Egyptian writing (Coffin text, spell 261), Heka existed "before duality had yet come into being." The term "Heka" was also used for the practice of magical ritual. The Coptic word "hik" is derived from the Ancient Egyptian.

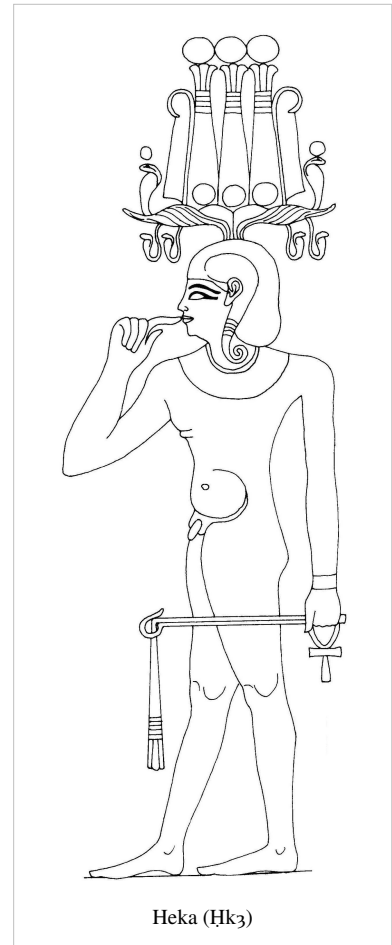
Heka literally means *activating the Ka*, the aspect of the soul which embodied personality. Egyptians thought activating the power of the soul was how magic worked. "Heka" also implied great power and influence, particularly in the case of drawing upon the Ka of the gods. Heka acted together with *Hu*, the principle of divine utterance, and *Sia*, the concept of divine omniscience, to create the basis of creative power both in the mortal world and the world of the gods.

As the one who *activates Ka*, Heka was also said to be the son of Atum, the creator of things in general, or occasionally the son of Khnum, who created specific individual Ba (another aspect of the soul). As the son of Khnum, his mother was said to be Menhit.

The hieroglyph for his name featured a twist of flax within a pair of raised arms; however, it also vaguely resembles a pair of entwined snakes within someone's arms. Consequently, Heka was said to have battled and conquered two serpents, and was usually depicted as a man choking two giant entwined serpents. Medicine and doctors were thought to be a form of magic, and so Heka's priesthood performed these activities.

Egyptians believed that with *Heka*, the activation of the *Ka*, an aspect of the soul of both gods and humans, (and divine personification of magic), they could influence the gods and gain protection, healing and transformation. Health and wholeness of being were sacred to *Heka*. There is no word for religion in the ancient Egyptian language, mundane and religious world views were not distinct; thus *Heka* was not a secular practice but rather a religious observance. Every aspect of life, every word, plant, animal and ritual was connected to the power and authority of the gods.^[1]

In ancient Egypt, medicine consisted of four components; the primeval potency that empowered the creator-god was identified with *Heka*, who was accompanied by magical rituals known as *Seshaw* held within sacred texts called *Rw*. In addition *Pekhret*, medicinal prescriptions, were given to patients to bring relief. This magic was used in temple rituals as well as informal situations by priests. These rituals, along with medical practices, formed an integrated therapy for both physical and spiritual health. Magic was also used for protection against the angry deities, jealous ghosts, foreign demons and sorcerers who were thought to cause illness, accidents, poverty and infertility.^[1]



Heka (Hk3)

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External links

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Hemen

In Egyptian mythology, **Hemen** was a falcon-god.

Places of worship

Often worshipped as a divine entity unified with Horus, as Horus-Hemen lord of Asphynis^[1] or Horakhte-Hemen of Hefat^{[2][3][4]} W. M. Flinders Petrie refers to Hemen as a god of Tophium.^[5] Hemen is also used for the name of a town of ancient Egypt (as mentioned by Flinders Petrie during his studies of Abydos).^[6]

Some examples of artifacts containing references to Hemen

Hemen is mentioned in a limited number of inscriptions and texts. Some of these include:

- Ankhtifi, a monarch dated to the first intermediate period, is shown inspecting a fleet, killing a hippopotamus in Hefat during festivities and offering the hippopotamus to Hemen.^[7]
- A round topped stela from the 13th dynasty invokes Ptah-Sokari-Osiris and Horus-Hemen lord of Asphynis. The stela was formerly in the V. Golenishchev collection, but is now in Moscow, in the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts.^[8]
- The chief sculptor Userhat who lived at the end of the 18th dynasty / beginning 19th dynasty mentions "causing cult statues to rest in their shrine". Hemen of Hefat is one of the gods listed among those Userhat was responsible for.^[9]
- Statue from the time of Amenhotep III; Now in Avignon, Musée Calvet.^{[10][11]}
- In the 22nd dynasty Hemen of Hefat is mentioned as an oracle. A man named Ikeni appears before Hemen in Hefat and the god says "Ikeni is right! He paid (etc.)".^[12]
- Taharqa is shown before the god Hemen in a statue which is now in the Louvre.
- In ca 300 BC Hemen's cult is still active as attested by an inscription of an official named Hornefer.^[13]
- In the Griffiths Institute listing: A stone object with Hemen possibly hawk-headed showing text of Amenophis III 'beloved of Hemen lord of the sed-festival'.^[14]



Taharqa offering before Hemen. Statue from the Louvre.



Different perspective showing Hemen in more detail.

see also

- Sed festival

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- [12] Kim Ryholt, A Pair of Oracle Petitions Addressed to Horus-of-the-Camp, The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, Vol. 79 (1993), pp. 189-198
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Hemsut

In Egyptian mythology, **Hemsut** (or **Hemuset**) was the goddess of fate and protection. She is representative of the *ka*. Her headdress bears a shield, above which are two crossed arrows.

Heqet

Heqet in hieroglyphs
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To the Egyptians, the frog was a symbol of life and fertility, since millions of them were born after the annual inundation of the Nile, which brought fertility to the otherwise barren lands. Consequently, in Egyptian mythology, there began to be a frog-goddess, who represented fertility, referred to by Egyptologists as **Heqet** (also **Heqat**, **Hekit**, **Heket** etc., more rarely **Hegit**, **Heget** etc.^[1]), written with the determinative *frog*.^[2]

Name and depiction

Her name was probably pronounced more like ***Ḥaqātat** in Middle Egyptian, hence her later Greek counterpart Ἑκάτη (see Hecate).^[3] Heqet was usually depicted as a frog, or a woman with a frog's head, or more rarely as a frog on the end of a phallus to explicitly indicate her association with fertility. She was often referred to as the wife of Khnum.^[4]

Worship of Heqet

The beginning of her cult dates to the early dynastic period at least. Her name was part of the names of some high-born Second Dynasty individuals buried at Helwan and was mentioned on a stela of Wepemnofret and in the Pyramid Texts. Early frog statuettes are often thought to be depictions of her.^[5]

Later, as a fertility goddess, associated explicitly with the last stages of the flooding of the Nile, and so with the germination of corn, she became associated with the final stages of childbirth. This association, which appears to have arisen during the Middle Kingdom, gained her the title *She who hastens the birth*.^[6] Some claim that—even though no ancient Egyptian term for "midwife" is known for certain—midwives often called themselves the *Servants of Heqet*, and that her priestesses were trained in midwifery.^[7] Women often wore amulets of her during childbirth, which depicted Heqet as a frog, sitting in a lotus.

Heqet was considered the wife of Khnum, who formed the bodies of new children on his potter's wheel.^[8]

In the myth of Osiris developed, it was said that it was Heqet who breathed life into the new body of Horus at birth, as she was the goddess of the last moments of birth. As the birth of Horus became more intimately associated with the resurrection of Osiris, so Heqet's role became one more closely associated with resurrection. Eventually, this association led to her amulets gaining the phrase *I am the resurrection*, and consequently the amulets were used by early Christians.^[9]

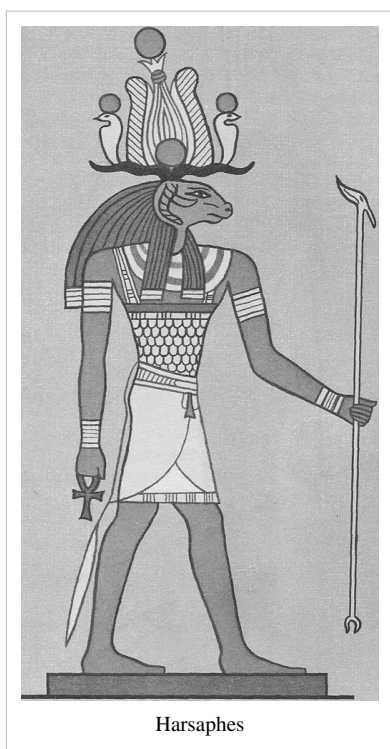
Footnotes

- [1] Armour, *op.cit.*, p.116
- [2] Erman, *op.cit.* vol. 3, 169.10
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- [5] Wilkinson, Toby, p. 286
- [6] cf. the role of Heget in the story of *The Birth of the Royal Children* from the Westcar Papyrus. Lichtheim, *op.cit.* p.220
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Heryshaf



[]

Heryshaf in hieroglyphs

In Egyptian mythology, **Heryshaf**, or **Hershef**, (Egyptian *Hry-š=f* "He who is on his lake"),^[1] transcribed in Greek as **Harsaphes** (Ἡρσάφης) was an ancient ram-god whose cult was centered in Herakleopolis Magna (now Ihnasiyyah al-Madinah). He was identified with Ra and Osiris in Egyptian mythology,^[2] and to Heracles in Greek mythology. The identification with Heracles may be related to the fact that in later times his name was sometimes reanalysed as *Hry-šf.t* "He who is over strength." One of his titles was "Ruler of the Riverbanks." Heryshaf was a creator and fertility god who was born from the primeval waters. He was pictured as a man with the head of a ram, or as a ram.

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Silver statue of Heryshaf in the Louvre

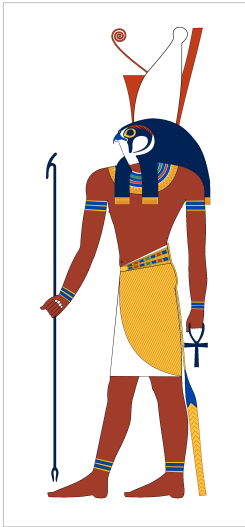
Hesat

Hesat is an ancient Egyptian goddess in the form of a cow. She was said to provide humanity with milk (called "the beer of Hesat") and in particular to suckle the pharaoh and several ancient Egyptian bull gods. In the *Pyramid Texts* she is said to be the mother of Anubis and of the deceased king. She was especially connected with Mnevis, the living bull god worshipped at Heliopolis, and the actual mothers of Mnevis bulls were buried in a cemetery dedicated to Hesat. In Ptolemaic times (304–30 BC) she was closely linked with the goddess Isis.^[1]

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-

Horus

Horus	
	
Horus was often the ancient Egyptians' national patron god. He was usually depicted as a falcon-headed man wearing the <i>pschent</i>, or a red and white crown, as a symbol of kingship over the entire kingdom of Egypt.	
Major cult center	Nekhen, Behdet Edfu
Symbol	The wedjat eye
Consort	Hathor (in one version)
Parents	Osiris and Isis in some myths, and Nut and Geb in others.
Siblings	Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys (in some accounts)
Offspring	Imsety, Hapi, Duamutef, Qebehsenuef and Ihy

Horus (Arabic: *حورس* *Hwrs*) is one of the oldest and most significant deities in ancient Egyptian religion, who was worshipped from at least the late Predynastic period through to Greco-Roman times. Different forms of Horus are recorded in history, and these are treated as distinct gods by Egypt specialists.^[1] These various forms may possibly be different perceptions of the same multi-layered deity in which certain attributes or syncretic relationships are emphasized, not necessarily in opposition but complementary to one another, consistent with how the Ancient Egyptians viewed the multiple facets of reality.^[2] He was most often depicted as a falcon, most likely a lanner or peregrine, or as a man with a falcon head.^[3]

The earliest recorded form of Horus is the patron deity of Nekhen in Upper Egypt, who is the first known national god, specifically related to the king who in time came to be regarded as a manifestation of Horus in life and Osiris in death.^[1] The most commonly encountered family relationship describes Horus as the son of Isis and Osiris but in another tradition Hathor is regarded as his mother and sometimes as his wife.^[1] Horus served many functions in the Egyptian pantheon, most notably being the god of the sun, war and protection.

Etymology

ḥr "Horus" in hieroglyphs

Horus is recorded in Egyptian hieroglyphs as ḥr.w; the pronunciation has been reconstructed as *Ḥāru, meaning "falcon". Additional meanings are thought to have been "the distant one" or "one who is above, over".^[4] By Coptic times, the name became *Hōr*. It was adopted into Greek as Ὡρος *Hōros*. The original name also survives in later Egyptian names such as Har-si-ese literally "Horus, son of Isis".

Horus was also known as *Nekheny*, meaning "falcon". Some have proposed that Nekheny may have been another falcon-god, worshipped at Nekhen (city of the hawk), with which Horus was identified from early on. Horus may be shown as a falcon on the Narmer Palette dating from the time of unification of Upper and Lower Egypt.

Note of Changes Over Time

In early Egypt, Horus was the brother of Isis, Osiris, Set and Nephthys. As different cults formed, he became the son of Isis. Isis remained the sister of Osiris, Set, and Nephthys.

Horus and the Pharaoh

Pyramid texts ca. the 25th century BC describe the nature of the Pharaoh in different characters as both Horus and Osiris. The Pharaoh as Horus in life became the Pharaoh as Osiris in death, where he was united with the rest of the gods. New incarnations of Horus succeeded the deceased pharaoh on earth in the form of new Pharaohs.

The lineage of Horus, the eventual product of unions between the children of Atum, may have been a means to explain and justify Pharaonic power; The gods produced by Atum were all representative of cosmic and terrestrial forces in Egyptian life; by identifying Horus as the offspring of these forces, then identifying him with Atum himself, and finally identifying the Pharaoh with Horus, the Pharaoh theologically had dominion over all the world.

The notion of Horus as the Pharaoh seems to have been superseded by the concept of the Pharaoh as the son of Ra during the Fifth Dynasty of Egypt.^[5]

Origin mythology

Horus was born to the goddess Isis after she retrieved all the dismembered body parts of her murdered husband Osiris, except his penis which was thrown into the Nile and eaten by a catfish,^{[6][7]} or sometimes by a crab, and according to Plutarch's account (see Osiris) used her magic powers to resurrect Osiris and fashion a gold phallus^[8] to conceive her son (older Egyptian accounts have the penis of Osiris surviving).

Once Isis knew she was pregnant with Horus, she fled to the Nile Delta marshlands to hide from her brother Set who jealously killed Osiris and who she knew would want to kill their son.^[1] There Isis bore a divine son, Horus.

Mythological roles

r^s-ḥr-3ḥty "Ra-Horakhty" in hieroglyphs

Sky god

Since Horus was said to be the sky, he was considered to also contain the sun and moon. It became said that the sun was his right eye and the moon his left, and that they traversed the sky when he, a falcon, flew across it. Later, the reason that the moon was not as bright as the sun was explained by a tale, known as the *contestings of Horus and Set*, originating as a metaphor for the conquest of Upper Egypt by Lower Egypt in about 3000 BCE. In this tale, it was said that Set, the patron of Upper Egypt, and Horus, the patron of Lower Egypt, had battled for Egypt brutally, with neither side victorious, until eventually the gods sided with Horus.

As Horus was the ultimate victor he became known as **Harsiesis**, **Heru-ur** or **Har-Wer** (ḥr.w wr 'Horus the Great'), but more usually translated as **Horus the Elder**. In the struggle Set had lost a testicle, explaining why the desert, which Set represented, is infertile. Horus' left eye had also been gouged out, then a new eye was created by part of Khonsu, the moon god, and was replaced.

Horus was occasionally shown in art as a naked boy with a finger in his mouth sitting on a lotus with his mother. In the form of a youth, Horus was referred to as **Neferhor**. This is also spelled **Nefer Hor**, **Nephoros** or **Nopheros** (nfr ḥr.w) meaning 'The Good Horus'.

The Eye of Horus is an ancient Egyptian symbol of protection and royal power from deities, in this case from Horus or Ra. The symbol is seen on images of Horus' mother, Isis, and on other deities associated with her.

In the Egyptian language, the word for this symbol was "Wedjat".^{[9][10]} It was the eye of one of the earliest of Egyptian deities, Wadjet, who later became associated with Bast, Mut, and Hathor as well. Wedjat was a solar deity and this symbol began as her eye, an all seeing eye. In early artwork, Hathor is also depicted with this eye.^[11] Funerary amulets were often made in the shape of the Eye of Horus. The Wedjat or Eye of Horus is "the central element" of seven "gold, faience, carnelian and lapis lazuli" bracelets found on the mummy of Shoshenq II.^[12] The Wedjat "was intended to protect the king [here] in the afterlife"^[12] and to ward off evil. Ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern sailors would frequently paint the symbol on the bow of their vessel to ensure safe sea travel.^[13]



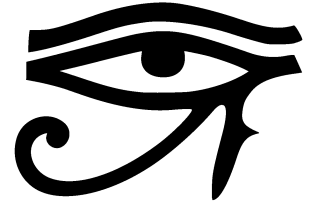
Horus, patron deity of Hierakonpolis (near Edfu), the predynastic capital of Upper Egypt. Its head was executed by means of beating the gold then connecting it with the copper body. A uraeus is fixed to the diadem which supports two tall openwork feathers. The eyes are inlaid with Gold and obsidian. (6th dynasty).



Horus represented in relief with Wadjet and wearing the double crown – *Temple of Hatshepsut*



Horus relief in the Temple of Edfu



Wedjat, Eye of Horus

God of war and hunting



Horus depicted as a falcon

Horus was also said to be a god of war and hunting. The Horus falcon is shown upon a standard on the predynastic Hunters Palette in the "lion hunt".

Thus he became a symbol of majesty and power as well as the model of the pharaohs. The Pharaohs were said to be Horus in human form.

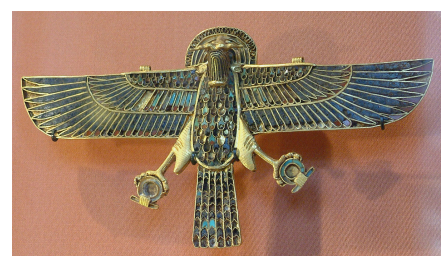
Furthermore Nemty, another war god, was later identified as Horus.^[14]

Conflict between Horus and Set

Horus was told by his mother, Isis, to protect the people of Egypt from Set, the god of the desert, who had killed his father Osiris.^{[15][16]}

Horus had many battles with Set, not only to avenge his father, but to choose the rightful ruler of Egypt. In these battles, Horus came to be associated with Lower Egypt, and became its patron.

According to Papyrus Chester-Beatty I, Set is depicted as trying to prove his dominance by seducing Horus and then having intercourse with him. However, Horus places his hand between his thighs and catches Set's semen, then subsequently throws it in the river, so that he may not be said to have been inseminated by Set. Horus then deliberately spreads his own semen on some lettuce, which was Set's favorite food. After Set had eaten the lettuce, they went to the gods to try to settle the argument over the rule of Egypt. The gods first listened to Set's claim of dominance over Horus, and call his semen forth, but it answered from the river, invalidating his claim. Then, the gods listened to Horus' claim of having dominated Set, and call his semen forth, and it answered from inside Set.^{[17][18]}



Horus, (Louvre Museum), 'Shen rings' in his grasp



Figure of a Horus Falcon, between circa 300 and circa 250 BC (Greco-Roman).^[19] The Walters Art Museum.

However, Set still refused to relent, and the other gods were getting tired from over eighty years of fighting and challenges. Horus and Set challenged each other to a boat race, where they each raced in a boat made of stone. Horus and Set agreed, and the race started. But Horus had an edge: his boat was made of wood painted to resemble stone, rather than true stone. Set's boat, being made of heavy stone, sank, but Horus's did not. Horus then won the race, and Set stepped down and officially gave Horus the throne of Egypt.^[20] But after the New Kingdom, Set still was considered Lord of the desert and its oases.^[21]

This myth, along with others, could be seen as an explanation of how the two kingdoms of Egypt (Upper and Lower) came to be united. Horus was seen as the God of Upper Egypt, and Set as the God of Lower Egypt. In this myth, the respective Upper and Lower deities have a fight, through which Horus is the victor. However, some of Horus (representing Upper Egypt) enters into Set (Lower Egypt) thus explaining why Upper Egypt is dominant over Lower Egypt.^{[22] [23]} Set's regions were then considered to be of the desert.

Heru-pa-khered (Horus the Younger)

Horus the Younger, Harpocrates to the Ptolemaic Greeks, is represented in the form of a youth wearing a lock of hair (a sign of youth) on the right of his head while sucking his finger. In addition, he usually wears the united crowns of Egypt, the crown of upper Egypt and the crown of lower Egypt. He is a form of the rising sun, representing its earliest light.

Heru-ur (Horus the Elder)

In this form he represented the god of light and the husband of Hathor. He was one of the oldest gods of ancient Egypt. He became the patron of Nekhen (Hierakonpolis) and the first national god (God of the Kingdom). Later, he also became the patron of the pharaohs, and was called the son of truth.^[citation needed] — signifying his role as an important upholder of Maat. He was seen as a great falcon with outstretched wings whose right eye was the sun and the left one was the moon. In this form, he was sometimes given the title **Kemwer**, meaning *(the) great black (one)*.

The Greek form of **Heru-ur** (or **Har wer**) is **Haroeris**. Other variants include **Hor Merti** 'Horus of the two eyes' and **Horkhenti Irti**.^[24]

Horus in Thelema

In the cosmology of Aleister Crowley's religio-philosophical system of Thelema, the god Horus is the third god to speak via a chapter of The Book of the Law, in his guise or manifestation as Ra-Hoor-Khuit. Regarded by Thelemites as the Lord of the Aeon, he is symbolized as a throned man with the head of a hawk who carries a wand. He is associated with the Sun and the active energies of Thelemic magick. The 'Aeon (Thelema) of Horus' in the modern age is held by Crowley to mark the turning away from the past patriarchal religions (Aeon of Osiris) and matriarchal religions (Aeon of Isis) towards a new era of freedom and the reign of the 'Crowned and Conquering Child'.

Misconceptions in Popular Media

The documentary movie *Religulous* (2008), the internet movie *Zeitgeist* (2007) and the book *The Christ Conspiracy* claim that Horus was born of a virgin. Egyptian texts demonstrate that Horus' mother was the goddess Isis, and not a human virgin. Horus was conceived when Isis resurrected the dismembered god Osiris and had intercourse with him, which precludes the idea of virginity, and certainly parthenogenesis.^[25]

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External links

- UCAR educational article about Horus (http://www.windows.ucar.edu/tour/link=/mythology/horus_sun.html&edu=high)

Hu (mythology)

Hu "ḥw" in hieroglyphs
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In Egyptian mythology, **Hu** (*ḥw*) is the deification of the first word, the word of creation, that Atum was said to have exclaimed upon ejaculating or, alternatively, his self-castration, in his masturbatory act of creating the Ennead.

Hu is mentioned already in the Old Kingdom Pyramid texts (PT 251, PT 697) as companion of the deceased pharaoh. Together with Sia, he was depicted in the retinue of Thot, with whom he was also occasionally identified.

In the Middle Kingdom, all gods participated in Hu and Sia, and were associated with Ptah who created the universe by uttering the word of creation. Hu was depicted in human shape, as a falcon, or as a man with a ram's head.

In the New Kingdom, both Hu and Sia together with Heke, Irer and Sedjem were members of the fourteen creative powers of Amun-Ra. By the time of Ptolemaic Egypt, Hu had merged with Shu (air).



Hu and Renenutet

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Iabet

Iabet



Iabet is depicted on the left. Next to her is king Ramses III.

Goddess of the east	
Major cult center	Panopolis
Consort	Min Iabeth

Iabet (Iabtet, Iab, Abet, Abtet, Ab) is a goddess in Egyptian mythology, counterpart of Imentet.

Mythology

She is a cleanser of the sun god Ra, and goddess of east. Her main husband is fertility god Min. She was worshiped in Panopolis, with her husband.^[1]

In the Amduat, Iabet is depicted as a woman with her arms by her sides, under the name of Iab. Along with eleven other goddesses, including Isis and her grandmother Tefnut, the group was known as "Those who give praises to Ra as he passes over Wernes".

Nefertiabet

One princess – Nefertiabet – is named after this goddess. Her father was pharaoh Khufu.^[2]

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Iah

"Iah"^[1]
in hieroglyphs

Iah (Egyptian: ꜥꜣh, transliterated as *Yah*, *Jah*, *Jah(w)*, *Joh* or *Aah* ^[2]) is a god of the moon in ancient Egyptian religion. His name simply means *moon*. By the New Kingdom he was less prominent as a moon deity than the other gods with lunar connections, Thoth and Khonsu. As a result of the functional connection between them he could be identified with either of those deities.

He was sometimes considered an adult form of Khonsu and was increasingly absorbed by him. Iah continued to appear in amulets and occasional other representations, similar to Khonsu in appearance, with the same lunar symbols on his head and occasionally the same tight garments. He differed in usually wearing a full wig instead of a child's sidelock, and sometimes an Atef crown topped by another symbol.^[3] As time went on, Iah also became Iah-Djuhty, meaning "god of the new moon."^[4]

Iah was also assimilated with Osiris, god of the dead, perhaps because, in its monthly cycle, the moon appears to renew itself. Iah also seems to have assumed the lunar aspect of Thoth, god of knowledge, writing and calculation; the segments of the moon were used as fractional symbols in writing.^[5]

One queen was called Iah.

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Iat

Iat	
Milk and, by association, of nurturing and childbirth	
Major cult center	Egypt

Iat ^[1] in hieroglyphs

Iat is an Egyptian minor goddess of milk and, by association, of nurturing and childbirth.^[1] The name of the goddess resembles *iatet* which is Egyptian word for "milk". The goddess is seldom mentioned in ancient Egyptian texts, and that's why very little is known about her. Some mentioning of Iat can be found in the Pyramid Texts like where a king is saying— "my foster-mother is Iat, and it is she who nourishes me, it is indeed she who bore me".^[1]

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Ihy

Ihy is a god in ancient Egyptian mythology who represents the ecstasy of playing the sistrum. His name may mean "sistrum player", referring to his function, or "calf", alluding to his relationship with the cow goddess Hathor who was often said to be his mother. Other goddesses might be called his mother, however, including Isis, Sekhmet, and Neith. The god Horus was usually said to be Ihy's father, although at times Ra took that role instead. Ihy was depicted as a child holding a sistrum or as a nude child with his finger in this mouth. He was worshiped alongside Horus and Hathor at Dendera.^[1]

References

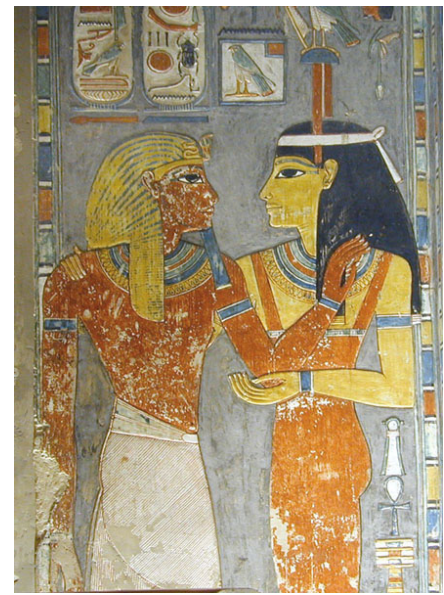
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Imentet

Imentet was a goddess in Ancient Egyptian religion representing the necropolis west of the Nile. She is depicted as a woman wearing the hieroglyph for "west" on her head, and often appears in tombs welcoming the deceased into the afterlife. However, she was so closely linked with Hathor and Isis in their afterlife roles that she may be less an independent deity than an alternate form of those two goddesses.^[1]

References

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Imentet greeting Pharaoh Horemheb in his tomb

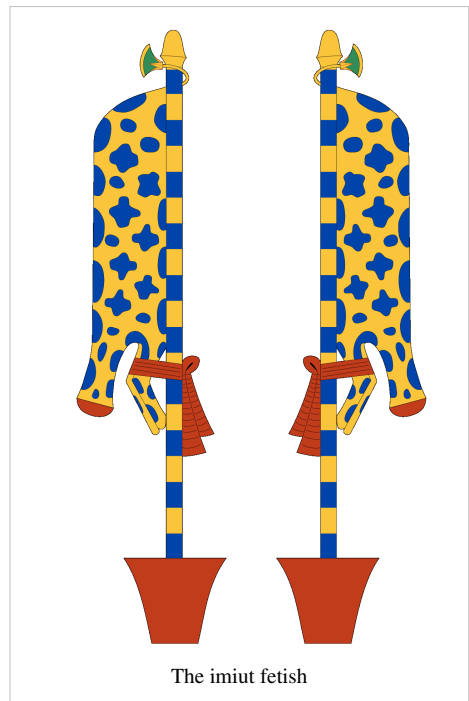
Imiut fetish

The **Imiut fetish** has been documented throughout the history of Ancient Egypt. This was a stuffed, headless animal skin, often a feline or bull, which was tied by the tail to a pole terminating in a lotus bud, inserted into a stand. The fetish was present in Egyptian funerary rites from the earliest ages. Although its origin and purpose is unknown, the imiut fetish dates as far back as to the First Dynasty (3100-2890 BC).

History

In very early Egyptian mythology, the deity Imiut (meaning, "He who is in his wrappings") may have been a god of the underworld, although insufficient records survive to explain whether this was the case. An early example found in 1914 by an expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art near the pyramid of Senusret I (c. 1971-1928 BCE) was placed in a shrine.^[1]

Since it was later connected to the god Anubis, it is sometimes called the **Anubis fetish**. One idea is that it came to symbolise Anubis as an embalmer, although this is unlikely to be the original understanding, as Anubis was originally a god of the dead, rather than just embalming. There are depictions of the imiut fetish on ancient Egyptian temples, and sometimes there were models of it included with the funerary equipment, most notably the two found in the burial chamber of Tutankhamun by Howard Carter.



The imiut fetish

Notes

Imset

Imseti in hieroglyphs

In Egyptian mythology, **Imseti** (also transcribed **Imset**, **Amset**, **Amsety**, **Mesti**, and **Mesta**) was a funerary deity, one of the Four sons of Horus, who were associated with the canopic jars, specifically the one which contained the liver. Unlike his brothers, Imsety was not associated with any animal and was always depicted as human. Isis was considered his protector.



Representation of Imset

Isis

Isis

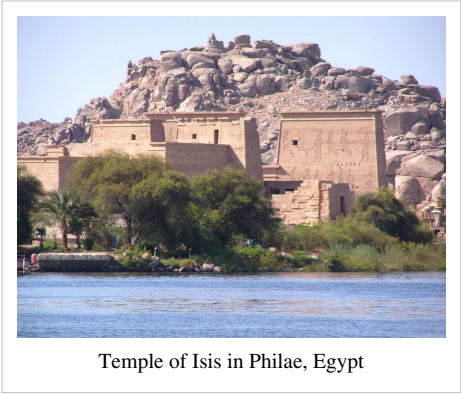


The goddess Isis portrayed as a woman, wearing a headdress shaped like a throne and with an Ankh in her hand

Goddess of motherhood, magic and fertility

Major cult center	Philae, Abydos
Symbol	the throne, the sun disk with cow's horns, the sycamore tree
Consort	Osiris
Parents	Geb and Nut
Siblings	Osiris, Set, and Nephthys

Isis (Ancient Greek: Ἴσις, original Egyptian pronunciation more likely "Aset" or "Iset") is a goddess in Ancient Egyptian religious beliefs, whose worship spread throughout the Greco-Roman world. She was worshipped as the ideal mother and wife as well as the patroness of nature and magic. She was the friend of slaves, sinners, artisans, and the downtrodden, and she listened to the prayers of the wealthy, maidens, aristocrats, and rulers.^[1] Isis is often depicted as the mother of Horus, the hawk-headed god of war and protection (although in some traditions Horus's mother was Hathor). Isis is also known as protector of the dead and goddess of children.



The name Isis means "Throne".^[2] Her headdress is a throne. As the personification of the throne, she was an important representation of the pharaoh's power. The pharaoh was depicted as her child, who sat on the throne she provided. Her cult was popular throughout Egypt, but her most important temples were at Behbeit El-Hagar in the Nile delta, and, beginning in the reign with Nectanebo I (380–362 BCE), on the island of Philae in Upper Egypt.

In the typical form of her myth, Isis was the first daughter of Geb, god of the Earth, and Nut, goddess of the Sky, and she was born on the fourth intercalary day. She married her brother, Osiris, and she conceived Horus with him. Isis was instrumental in the resurrection of Osiris when he was murdered by Set. Using her magical skills, she restored his body to life after having gathered the body parts that had been strewn about the earth by Set.^[3]

This myth became very important during the Greco-Roman period. For example it was believed that the Nile River flooded every year because of the tears of sorrow which Isis wept for Osiris. Osiris's death and rebirth was relived each year through rituals. The worship of Isis eventually spread throughout the Greco-Roman world, continuing until the suppression of paganism in the Christian era.^[4] The popular motif of Isis suckling her son Horus, however, lived on in a Christianized context as the popular image of Mary suckling the infant son Jesus from the fifth century onward.^{[5][6]}

Etymology

OR
Isis in hieroglyphs

The name *Isis* is the Greek version of her name, with a final *-s* added to the original Egyptian form because of the grammatical requirements of the Greek language (*-s* often being a marker of the nominative case in ancient Greek).

The Egyptian name was recorded as *is.t* or *ʒs.t* and meant "(She of the Throne)". The true Egyptian pronunciation remains uncertain, however, because hieroglyphs do not indicate vowels. Based on recent studies which present us with approximations based on contemporary languages (specifically, Greek) and Coptic evidence, the reconstructed pronunciation of her name is **Usat* [**ʔyːsəʔ*]. Osiris's name, **Usir* also starts with the throne glyph *ʔs*.^[7]

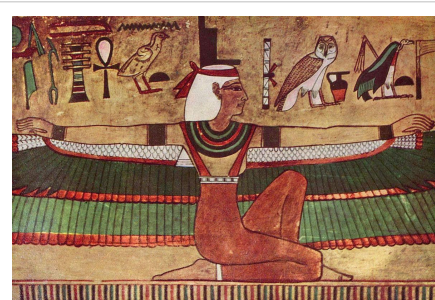
For convenience, Egyptologists arbitrarily choose to pronounce her name as "ee-set". Sometimes they may also say "ee-say" because the final "t" in her name was a feminine suffix, which is known to have been dropped in speech during the last stages of the Egyptian and Greek languages.

Principal features of the cult

Origins

Most Egyptian deities were first worshipped by very local cults, and they retained those local centres of worship even as their popularity spread, so that most major cities and towns in Egypt were known as the home of a particular deity. The origins of the cult of Isis are uncertain, but it is believed that she was originally an independent and popular deity in predynastic times, prior to 3100 BCE, at Sebennytos in the Nile delta.^[3]

The first written references to Isis date back to the Fifth dynasty of Egypt. Based on the association of her name with the throne, some early Egyptologists believed that Isis's original function was that of throne-mother.^[citation needed] However, more recent scholarship suggests that aspects of that role came later by association. In many African tribes, the throne is known as *the mother of the king*, and that concept fits well with either theory, possibly giving insight into the thinking of ancient Egyptians.



Isis depicted with outstretched wings (wall painting, c. 1360 BCE)

Classical Egyptian period

During the Old Kingdom period, Isis was represented as the wife or assistant to the deceased pharaoh. Thus she had a funerary association, her name appearing over eighty times in the pharaoh's funeral texts (the Pyramid Texts). This association with the pharaoh's wife is consistent with the role of Isis as the spouse of Horus, the god associated with the pharaoh as his protector, and then later as the deification of the pharaoh himself.

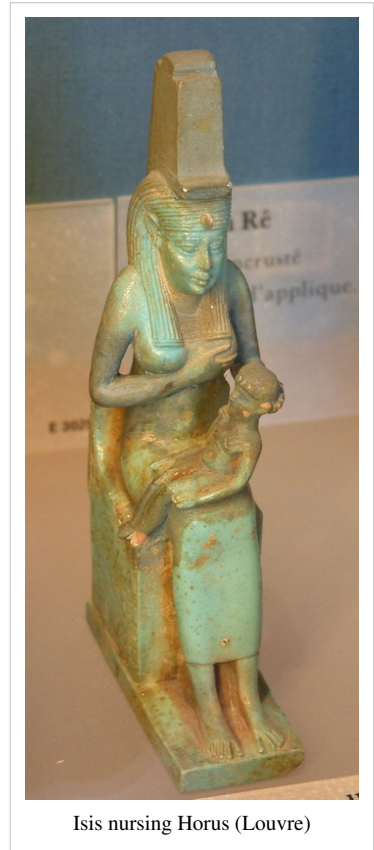
But in addition, Isis was also represented as the mother of the "four sons of Horus", the four deities who protected the canopic jars containing the pharaoh's internal organs. More specifically, Isis was viewed as the protector of the liver-jar-deity, Imsety.^[8] By the Middle Kingdom period, as the funeral texts began to be used by members of Egyptian society other than the royal family, the role of Isis as protector also grew, to include the protection of nobles and even commoners.^[citation needed]

By the New Kingdom period, in many places, Isis was more prominent than her spouse. She was seen as the mother of the pharaoh, and was often depicted breastfeeding the pharaoh. It is theorized that this displacement happened through the merging of cults from the various cult centers as Egyptian religion became more standardized.^[citation needed] When the cult of Ra rose to prominence, with its cult center at Heliopolis, Ra was identified with the similar deity, Horus. But Hathor had been paired with Ra in some regions, as the mother of the god. Since Isis was paired with Horus, and Horus was identified with Ra, Isis began to be merged with Hathor as *Isis-Hathor*. By merging with Hathor, Isis became the mother of Horus, as well as his wife. Eventually the mother role displaced the role of spouse. Thus, the role of spouse to Isis was open and in the Heliopolis pantheon, Isis became the wife of Osiris and the mother of Horus/Ra. This reconciliation of themes led to the evolution of the myth of Isis and Osiris.^[8]

Temples and priesthood

In Egypt, Isis would have received the same sort of rituals as other Egyptian Deities, including daily offerings. She was served by both priests and priestesses throughout the history of her cult. By the Greco-Roman era, many of her priests and priestesses had a reputation for wisdom and healing, and were said to have other special powers, including dream interpretation and the ability to control the weather, which they did by braiding or not combing their hair.^[citation needed] The latter was believed because the Egyptians considered knots to have magical powers.

The cult of Isis and Osiris continued up until the 6th century CE on the island of Philae in Upper Nile. The Theodosian decree (in about 380 CE) to destroy all pagan temples was not enforced there until the time of Justinian. This toleration was due to an old treaty made between the Blemyes-Nobadae and the emperor Diocletian. Every year they visited Elephantine and at certain intervals took the image of Isis up river to the land of the Blemyes for oracular purposes before returning it. Justinian sent Narses to destroy the sanctuaries, with the priests being arrested and the divine images taken to Constantinople.^[9] Philae was the last of the ancient Egyptian temples to be closed.



Isis nursing Horus (Louvre)

Iconography

Associations

"tyet" Knot of Isis in hieroglyphs

Due to the association between knots and magical power, a symbol of Isis was the *tiet* or *tyet* (meaning *welfare/life*), also called the *Knot of Isis*, *Buckle of Isis*, or the *Blood of Isis*, which is shown to the right. In many respects the *tyet* resembles an ankh, except that its arms point downward, and when used as such, seems to represent the idea of eternal life or resurrection. The meaning of *Blood of Isis* is more obscure, but the *tyet* often was used as a funerary amulet made of red wood, stone, or glass, so this may simply have been a description of the appearance of the materials used.^{[10][11][12]}

The star Sopdet (Sirius) is associated with Isis. The appearance of the star signified the advent of a new year and Isis was likewise considered the goddess of rebirth and reincarnation, and as a protector of the dead. The Book of the Dead outlines a particular ritual that would protect the dead, enabling travel anywhere in the underworld, and most of the titles Isis holds signify her as the goddess of protection of the dead.

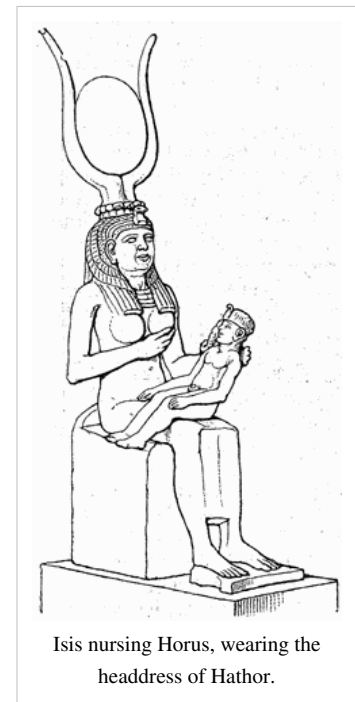
Probably due to assimilation with the goddess Aphrodite (Venus), during the Roman period, the rose was used in her worship. The demand for roses throughout the empire turned rose production into an important industry.

Depictions

In art, originally Isis was pictured as a woman wearing a long sheath dress and crowned with the hieroglyphic sign for a *throne*. Sometimes she is depicted as holding a lotus, or, as a sycamore tree. One pharaoh, Thutmose III, is depicted in his tomb as nursing from a sycamore tree that had a breast.

After she assimilated many of the roles of Hathor, Isis's headdress is replaced with that of Hathor: the horns of a cow on her head, with the solar disk between them, and often with her original throne symbol atop the solar disk. Sometimes she also is represented as a cow, or with a cow's head. She is often depicted with her young child, Horus (the pharaoh), with a crown, and a vulture. Occasionally she is represented as a kite flying above the body of Osiris or with the dead Osiris she works her magic to bring him back to life.

Most often Isis is seen holding only the generic ankh sign and a simple staff, but in late images she is seen sometimes with items usually associated mainly with Hathor, the sacred sistrum rattle and the fertility-bearing *menat* necklace. In *The Book of Coming Forth By Day* Isis is depicted standing on the prow of the Solar Barque with her arms outstretched.^[1]



Mythology

Sister-wife to Osiris



Isis Nursing Horus.^[13] The Walters Art Museum.

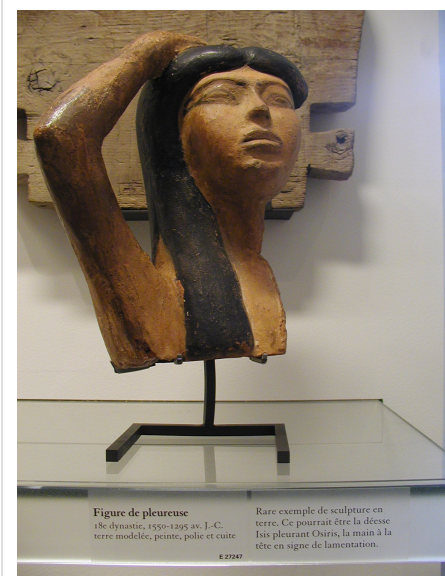
During the Old Kingdom period, the pantheons of individual Egyptian cities varied by region. During the 5th dynasty, Isis entered the pantheon of the city of Heliopolis. She was represented as a daughter of Nut and Geb, and sister to Osiris, Nephthys, and Set. The two sisters, Isis and Nephthys, often were depicted on coffins, with wings outstretched, as protectors against evil. As a funerary deity, she was associated with Osiris, lord of the underworld, and was considered his wife.

A later myth, when the cult of Osiris gained more authority, tells the story of Anubis, the god of the underworld. The tale describes how Nephthys was denied a child by Set and disguised herself as the much more attractive Isis to seduce him. The plot succeeded resulting in the birth of Anubis.

In fear of Set's retribution, Nephthys persuaded Isis to adopt Anubis, so that Set would not find out and kill the child. The tale describes both why Anubis is seen as an underworld deity (he becomes the adopted son of Osiris), and why he could not inherit Osiris's position (as he was not actually the son of Osiris but his brother Set), neatly preserving Osiris's position as lord of the underworld. It should be remembered, however, that this new myth was only a later creation of the Osirian cult who wanted to depict Set in an evil position, as the enemy of Osiris.

The most extensive account of the Isis-Osiris story known today is Plutarch's Greek description written in the 1st century CE, usually known under its Latin title *De Iside et Osiride*.^[14]

In that version, Set held a banquet for Osiris in which he brought in a beautiful box and said that whoever could fit in the box perfectly would get to keep it. Set had measured Osiris in his sleep and made sure that he was the only one who could fit the box. Several tried to see whether they fit. Once it was Osiris's turn to see if he could fit in the box, Set closed the lid on him so that the box was now a coffin for Osiris. Set flung the box in the Nile so that it would drift far away. Isis went looking for the box so that Osiris could have a proper burial. She found the box in a tree in Byblos, a city along the Phoenician coast, and brought it back to Egypt, hiding it in a swamp. But Set went hunting that night and found the box. Enraged, Set chopped Osiris's body into fourteen pieces and scattered them all over Egypt to ensure that Isis could never find Osiris again for a proper burial.^{[15][16]}



Rare terracotta image of Isis lamenting the loss of Osiris (eighteenth dynasty) Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Isis and her sister Nephthys went looking for these pieces, but could only find thirteen of the fourteen. Fish had swallowed the last piece, his phallus, so Isis made him a new one with magic, putting his body back together after which they conceived Horus. The number of pieces is described on temple walls variously as fourteen and sixteen, and occasionally forty-two, one for each nome or district.^[16]

Mother of Horus

Yet another set of late myths detail the adventures of Isis after the birth of Osiris's posthumous son, Horus. Isis was said to have given birth to Horus at Khemmis, thought to be located on the Nile Delta.^[17] Many dangers faced Horus after birth, and Isis fled with the newborn to escape the wrath of Set, the murderer of her husband. In one instance, Isis heals Horus from a lethal scorpion sting; she also performs other miracles in relation to the *cippi*, or the plaques of Horus. Isis protected and raised Horus until he was old enough to face Set, and subsequently, became the pharaoh of Egypt.

Magic

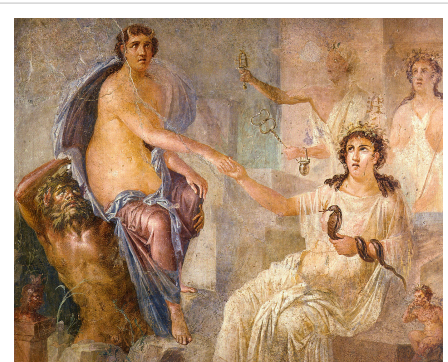
It was said that Isis tricked Ra (i.e. *Amun-Ra/Atum-Ra*) into telling her his "secret name," by causing a snake to bite him, for which only Isis had the cure. Knowing the secret name of a deity enabled one to have power of the deity. The use of secret names became central in many late Egyptian magic spells. By the late Egyptian historical period, after the occupations by the Greeks and the Romans, Isis became the most important and most powerful deity of the Egyptian pantheon because of her magical skills. Magic is central to the entire mythology of Isis, arguably more so than any other Egyptian deity.

Isis had a central role in Egyptian magic spells and ritual, especially those of protection and healing. In many spells, she also is completely merged even with Horus, where invocations of Isis are supposed to involve Horus's powers automatically as well. In Egyptian history the image of a wounded Horus became a standard feature of Isis's healing spells, which typically invoked the curative powers of the milk of Isis.^[18]

Greco-Roman world

Interpretatio graeca

Using the comparative methodology known as *interpretatio graeca*, the Greek historian Herodotus (5th century BCE) described Isis by comparison with the Greek goddess Demeter, whose mysteries at Eleusis offered initiates guidance in the afterlife and a vision of rebirth. Herodotus says that Isis was the only goddess worshiped by all Egyptians alike.^[19]



Isis (seated right) welcoming the Greek heroine Io as she is borne into Egypt on the shoulders of the personified Nile, as depicted in a Roman wall painting from Pompeii



Terracotta figure of
Isis-Aphrodite from
Ptolemaic Egypt

After the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great and the Hellenization of the Egyptian culture initiated by Ptolemy I Soter, Isis became known as *Queen of Heaven*.^[20] Other Mediterranean goddesses, such as Demeter, Astarte, and Aphrodite, became identified with Isis, as was the Arabian goddess Al-Ozza or Al-Uzza (العُزَّى al ʿozza) through a similarity of name, since etymology was thought to reveal the essential or primordial nature of the thing named.^[21] An alabaster statue of Isis from the 3rd century BCE, found in Ohrid, in the Republic of Macedonia, is depicted on the obverse of the Macedonian 10 denars banknote, issued in 1996.^[22]

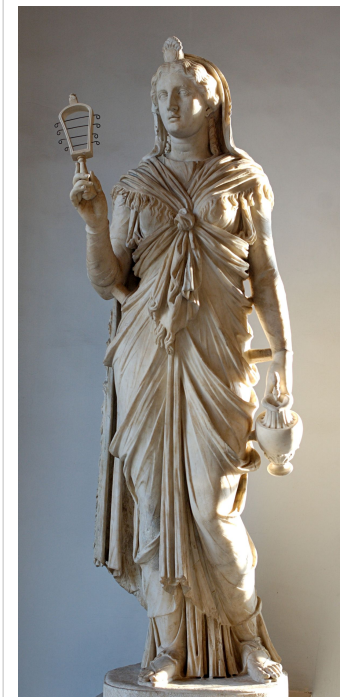
Isis in the Roman Empire

Tacitus writes that after the assassination of Julius Caesar, a temple in honour of Isis had been decreed, but was suspended by Augustus as part of his program to restore traditional Roman religion. The emperor Caligula, however, was open to Eastern religions, and the *Navigium Isidis*, a procession in honor of Isis, was established in Rome during his reign.^[23] According to the Jewish historian Josephus, Caligula donned female garb and took part in the mysteries he instituted. Vespasian, along with Titus, practised incubation in the Roman Iseum. Domitian built another Iseum along with a Serapeum. In a relief on the Arch of Trajan, the emperor appears before Isis and Horus, presenting them with votive offerings of wine.^[23] Hadrian decorated his villa at Tibur with Isiac scenes. Galerius regarded Isis as his protector.^[24]

The religion of Isis thus spread throughout the Roman Empire during the formative centuries of Christianity. Wall paintings and objects reveal her pervasive presence at Pompeii, preserved by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE. In Rome, temples were built and obelisks erected in her honour. In Greece, the cult of Isis was introduced to traditional centres of worship in Delos, Delphi, Eleusis and Athens, as well as in northern Greece. Harbours of Isis were to be found on the Arabian Sea and the Black Sea. Inscriptions show followers in Gaul, Spain, Pannonia, Germany, Arabia, Asia Minor, Portugal and many shrines even in Britain.^[25] Tacitus interprets a goddess among the Germanic Suebi as a form of Isis whose symbol (*signum*) was a ship.^[26] Bruce Lincoln regards the identity of this Germanic goddess as "elusive."^[27]

The Greek antiquarian Plutarch wrote a treatise on *Isis and Osiris*,^[28] a major source for Imperial theology concerning Isis.^[14] Plutarch describes Isis as "a goddess exceptionally wise and a lover of wisdom, to whom, as her name at least seems to indicate, knowledge and understanding are in the highest degree appropriate... ." The statue of Athena in Sais was identified with Isis, and according to Plutarch was inscribed "I am all that has been, and is, and shall be, and my robe no mortal has yet uncovered."^[29] At Sais, however, the patron goddess of the ancient cult was Neith, many of whose traits had begun to be attributed to Isis during the Greek occupation.

The Roman writer Apuleius recorded aspects of the cult of Isis in the 2nd century CE, including the *Navigium Isidis*, in his novel *The Golden Ass*. The protagonist Lucius prays to Isis as *Regina Caeli*, "Queen of Heaven":



Roman Isis holding a sistrum and
oinochoe and wearing a garment tied
with a characteristic knot, from the
time of Hadrian (117–138 CE)

You see me here, Lucius, in answer to your prayer. I am nature, the universal Mother, mistress of all the elements, primordial child of time, sovereign of all things spiritual, queen of the dead, queen of the ocean, queen also of the immortals, the single manifestation of all gods and goddesses that are, my nod governs the shining heights of Heavens, the wholesome sea breezes. Though I am worshipped in many aspects, known by countless names ... the Egyptians who excel in ancient learning and worship call me by my true name...Queen Isis.^[30]



Ruins of the Temple of Isis in Delos

According to Apuleius, these other names include manifestations of the goddess as Ceres, "the original nurturing parent"; Heavenly Venus (*Venus Caelestis*); the "sister of Phoebus", that is, Diana or Artemis as she is worshipped at Ephesus; or Proserpina (Greek Persephone) as the triple goddess of the underworld.^[31] From the middle Imperial period, the title *Caelestis*, "Heavenly" or "Celestial", is attached to several goddesses embodying aspects of a single, supreme Heavenly Goddess. The *Dea Caelestis* was identified with the constellation Virgo (the Virgin), who holds the divine balance of justice.

Greco-Roman temples

On the Greek island of Delos a Doric Temple of Isis was built on a high over-looking hill at the beginning of the Roman period to venerate the familiar trinity of Isis, the Alexandrian Serapis and Harpocrates. The creation of this temple is significant as Delos is particularly known as the birthplace of the Greek gods Artemis and Apollo who had temples of their own on the island long before the temple to Isis was built.

In the Roman Empire, a well-preserved example was discovered in Pompeii. The only sanctuary of Isis (*fanum Isidis*) identified with certainty in Roman Britain is located in Londinium (present-day London).^[32]

Late antiquity

The cult of Isis was part of the syncretic tendencies of religion in the Greco-Roman world of late antiquity. The names Isidoros and Isidora in Greek mean "gift of Isis" (similar to "Theodoros", "God's gift").

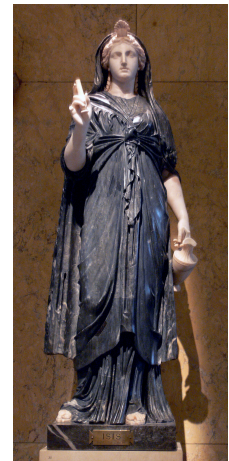
The sacred image of Isis with the Horus Child in Rome often became a model for the Christian Madonna with the Child Jesus and many of the epithets of the Egyptian Mother of God came to be used for the Christian Mother of God.^[33]

Notes

[1] R.E Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World*, p. 7, 1997, ISBN 978-0-8018-5642-6

[3] Veronica Ions, *Egyptian Mythology*, Paul Hamlyn, 1968, ISBN 978-0-600-02365-4

[4] Henry Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great*, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 526, ISBN 978-0-19-926577-0



Isis in black and white marble (Roman, 2nd century CE)

[5] Loverance, Rowena (2007). *Christian Art* (<http://books.google.com/books?id=FgQ2tHlgXZEC&pg=PA117#v=onepage&q&f=false>). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. p. 117. ISBN 978-0-674-02479-3

[7] The name "Isis" survived in Coptic dialects as *Ēse* or *Ēsi*, as well as in compound names such as "Har-si-Ese", which means "Horus, son of Isis".

[8] Joyce Tyldesley (2011), *The Penguin Book of Myths and Legends of Ancient Egypt*.

- [9] John Bagnell Bury, "History of the Later Roman Empire from the Death of Theodosius I. to the Death of Justinian", *The Suppression of Paganism*, ch22, p. 371, Courier Dover Publications, 1958, ISBN 0-486-20399-9
- [10] <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/00.4.39>
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- [17] Griffiths, J. Gwyn. (2002). "Isis". In D. B. Redford (Ed.), *The ancient gods speak: A guide to Egyptian religion*. p. 169. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [18] Silverman, *Ancient Egypt*, 135
- [19] Herodotus, *Histories*. 2.42 and 156.
- [20] R.E Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World*, 1997, ISBN 0-8018-5642-6
- [21] This is particularly characteristic of Stoic philosophy. See in general Davide Del Bello, *Forgotten Paths: Etymology and the Allegorical Mindset* (Catholic University of America Press, 2007).
- [22] National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia (<http://www.nbrm.gov.mk>). Macedonian currency. Banknotes in circulation: 10 Denars (<http://www.nbrm.gov.mk/default-en.asp?ItemID=A82826138490824E874DC0F6B8BCE3DE>). – Retrieved on 30 March 2009.
- [23] R.E Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World*, Ch17: "The Goddess Darling of the Roman Emperors", p. 235, 1997, ISBN 0-8018-5642-6
- [24] R.E Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World*, p.51, 1997, ISBN 0-8018-5642-6
- [25] R.E Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World* (<http://books.google.ie/books?id=WpOTnGH6X9wC&pg=PA7&lpg=PA7&dq=isis+temples+list&source=web&ots=M9i96VmWah&sig=4FfzV78P7y-w9PepvsRyusoB6BM&hl=en#PPA44,M1>), 1997, ISBN 0-8018-5642-6
- [26] Tacitus, *Germania* 9.
- [27] Bruce Lincoln, *Gods and Demons, Priests and Scholars: Critical Explorations in the History of Religions* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 21.
- [28] "Plutarch: Isis and Osiris" (http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Moralia/Isis_and_Osiris*/home.html). Loeb Classical Library.
- [29] Plutarch, translated by Frank Cole Babbitt, *Isis and Osiris* (http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Moralia/Isis_and_Osiris*/A.html), 1936, vol. 5 Loeb Classical Library
- [30] Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.2.
- [31] Stephen Benko, *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian roots of Mariology* (Brill, 2004), pp. 112–114: see also pp. 31, 51.
- [32] Martin Henig, *Religion in Roman Britain* (Taylor & Francis, 1984, 2005), p. 100.
- [33] National Geographic Video Mysteries of the Bible: Rivals of Jesus (<http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/national-geographic-channel/shows/mysteries-of-the-bible/ngc-rivals-of-jesus.html>). See 28 min 50s

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External links

- Britannica Online Encyclopedia (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/295449/Isis>)
- Dictionary of Greek and Roman biography and mythology (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0104:entry=isis-bio-1>)
- The Golden Bough by James Frazer
- The Laments of Isis and Nephthys

Iunit

Iunit was a minor goddess in ancient Egyptian religion, whose name means "She of Armant". She is the consort of Menthu.^[1]

References

- [1] Wilkinson, Richard H. (2003). *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. Thames & Hudson. p. 150

Iusaaset

Iusaset (/ˈjuːˈsæsɛt/; "the great one who comes forth") or **Iusas** /ɑːˈjuːsəs/ is the name of a primal goddess in Ancient Egyptian religion. She also is described as "the grandmother of all of the deities". This allusion is without any reference to a grandfather, so there might have been a very early, but now lost, myth with parthenogenesis as the means of the birth of the deities from the region where her cult arose near the delta of the Nile. Many alternative spellings of her name include *Iusaaset*, *Juesaes*, *Ausaas*, and *Jusas*, as well as in Greek **Saosis** /ˌsɛɪˈoʊsɪs/.

Art

In Ancient Egyptian art, Iusaaset appears as a woman wearing the horned vulture crown with the uraeus and the solar disk in it, and she carries an ankh in one hand and a scepter in the other. The Egyptian vulture, most sacred to the ancient Egyptians and symbolizing Nekhbet, one of the Two Ladies protecting Egypt, was thought to reproduce though parthenogenesis also. This association might be the basis for the similar view about the motherhood of Iusaaset. The vultures also were considered extremely good mothers. The horns, the uraeus, and the solar disk make a religious connection to Bat and Hathor.



The grandmother of the deities, Iusaaset, shown with her horned Egyptian vulture crown with the uraeus and the solar disk in it

Because of Iusaaset's link to the vulture and uraeus, it can be assumed that she links together both upper and lower Egypt, much like the goddess Mut who she is also associated with.

Although her origins are unclear, Iusaaset seems to be attested quite early in the Egyptian pantheon, being associated with creation and the creation of the deities. Many myths relate that she was seen as the mother of the first deities and the grandmother of the following deities, having *watched over* the birth of the ones that were her grandchildren. She remains as a primary deity in the pantheon throughout all eras of the culture, even through the Persian, Hyksos, Greek, and Roman occupations, and regardless of changes in the specific myths.

Association with acacia tree

Iusaaset was associated with the acacia tree,^[1] considered the *tree of life*, and thus with the oldest one known being situated just north of Heliopolis and, thereby, which became identified as the birthplace of the deities. Iusaaset was said to own this tree. The acacia tree was

renowned for its strength, hardness, medical properties, and edibility. Many useful applications gave it a central importance in the culture.

Changes in myths

One belief held that Iusaaset and Atum were the parents of Shu and Tefnut, the first deities. In this myth she often was described as his shadow, sister, or wife. Later other goddesses also became associated with Atum and one variant even relates that *he* gave birth to the deities, although that variant seems to have been rejected by many cultural and religious centers.

During the Old Kingdom the Egyptians believed that Atum lifted the dead pharaoh's soul from the tomb to the starry heavens.^[2] By the time of the New Kingdom, the Atum myth had merged in the Egyptian pantheon with that of Ra, who later was described as a creator and a solar deity as his cult arose. Their two identities were joined into Atum-Ra. After they were combined, Ra was seen as the whole sun and Atum came to be seen as the sun when it sets in the west (depicted as an old man leaning on his staff), while Khepri was seen as the sun when it was rising.

At these later times Iusaaset sometimes is described as the eye of Ra.

Sources

- Vandier, Jacques. 1964-66. "Iousâas et (Hathor)-Nébet-Hétépet." *Revue d'Égyptologie* 16-18.

[1] Iusâas (<http://henadology.wordpress.com/theology/netjeru/iusaas/>)

[2] Information about Atem (<http://www.philae.nu/akhet/NetjeruA.html#Atum>)

Kebechet

Kebechet	
Goddess of embalming liquid	
Name in hieroglyphs	
Symbol	Ostrich or snake
Consort	None
Parents	Anubis ^[1]

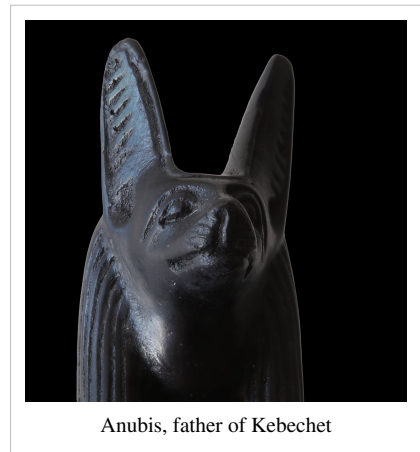
In Egyptian mythology, **Kebechet** (spelt in hieroglyphs as **Qeb-Hwt**, and also transliterated as **Khebhut**, **Kebehut**, **Qébéhout**, and **Kabehchet**) is a goddess, a deification of embalming liquid. Her name means *cooling water*.^[2]

Myths

Kebechet is a daughter of Anubis.^[3]

Kebechet was thought to give water to the spirits of the dead while they waited for the mummification process to be complete. She was probably related to mummification where she would fortify the body against corruption, so it would stay fresh for reanimation by the deceased's *ka*.

Kebechet was depicted as a snake.



References

- [1] Rosa Thode, *El panteón egipcio*, Qebhut en egiptologia.org (<http://www.egiptologia.org/mitologia/panteon/qebhut.htm>)
- [2] Caroline Seawright: Anubis, God of Embalming and Guide and Friend of the Dead... (<http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/anubis.html>)
- [3] Richard H. Wilkinson: *Die Welt der Götter im Alten Ägypten - Glaube, Macht, Mythologie* -. S. 223.

Khensit

In Egyptian mythology, **Chensit** (also spelled **Khensit**), which means *placenta*, was the patron goddess of the twentieth nome of Lower Egypt. Chensit was the wife of Sopdu and the daughter of Ra, and was depicted as an uraeus.

Khenti-Amentiu

Khenti-Amentiu, also **Khentiamentiu**, **Khenti-Amenti**, **Kenti-Amentiu** and many other spellings, is an ancient Egyptian deity whose name was also used as a title for Osiris and Anubis. The name means 'Foremost of the Westerners' or 'Chief of the Westerners', where 'Westerners' refers to the dead.^[1]

Khenti-Amentiu was depicted as a jackal-headed deity at Abydos in Upper Egypt, who stood guard over the city of the dead. Khenti-Amentiu is attested early at Abydos, perhaps even earlier than the unification of Egypt at the start of the Early Dynastic period. The name appears on the necropolis seals for the first dynasty pharaohs Den and Qa'a, and a temple dating to predynastic times was founded in Abydos for this god.^[2] In later times, Khenti-amentiu's name was taken up as a title for Osiris and Anubis, who were also funerary gods. Osiris also became the patron god of Abydos, taking Khenti-amentiu's place.^[1] However, the Egyptologist John D. Ray suggests that Khenti-amentiu is the same deity as Osiris, who was simply known by a different name before the middle of the Old Kingdom, when Osiris' name first appears.^[3]

References

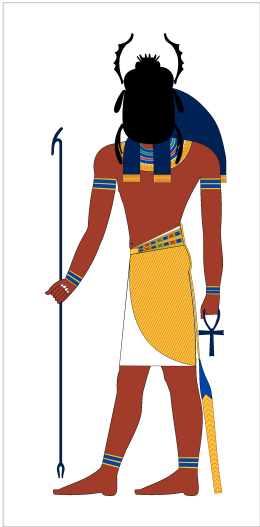
- [1] Wilkinson, Richard H. *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. pp. 119, 187. Thames & Hudson. 2003. ISBN 0-500-05120-8
 - [2] Wilkinson, Toby A. H. *Early Dynastic Egypt*. p. 249. Routledge, 1999. ISBN 0-203-20421-2
 - [3] Ray, John D. *Reflections of Osiris: Lives from Ancient Egypt*. p. 154. Oxford University Press. 2002. ISBN 978-0195158717
-

Khenti-kheti

In Egyptian mythology, **Khenti-kheti** (also spelt **Chenti-cheti**), was a crocodile-god, though he was later represented as a falcon-god. His name means "foremost retreatater".

Khepri

Khepri



Khepri is often represented as a scarab, or a scarab-headed man, holding aloft the morning sun.

God of rebirth and the sunrise

Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Heliopolis
Symbol	scarab beetle, blue lotus
Siblings	Atum, Ra

Khepri
in hieroglyphs

Khepri (also spelled **Khepera**, **Kheper**, **Khepra**, **Chepri**) is a god in ancient Egyptian religion. Khepri was connected with the scarab beetle (*kheprer*), because the scarab rolls balls of dung across the ground, an act that the Egyptians saw as a symbol of the forces that move the sun across the sky. Khepri was thus a solar deity. Young dung beetles, having been laid as eggs within the dung ball, emerge from it fully formed. Therefore, Khepri also represented creation and rebirth, and he was specifically connected with the rising sun and the mythical creation of the world. The Egyptian connected his name with the Egyptian language verb *kheper*, meaning "develop" or "come into being".^[1]

There was no cult devoted to Khepri, and he was largely subordinate to the greater sun god Ra. Often, Khepri and another solar deity, Atum, were seen as aspects of Ra: Khepri was the morning sun, Ra was the midday sun, and Atum was the sun in the evening.^[1]

Khepri was principally depicted as a scarab beetle, though in some tomb paintings and funerary papyri he is represented as a human male with a scarab as a head. He is also depicted as a scarab in a solar barque held aloft by Nun. The scarab amulets that the Egyptians used as jewelry and as seals represent Khepri.^[2]

In Fiction

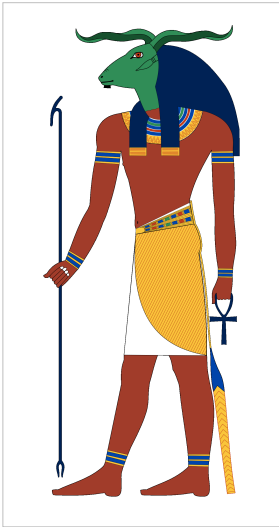
The 'Khepri' are featured prominently as a race in China Miéville's Bas Lag novels.

References

- [1] Wilkinson, Richard H. (2003). *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. Thames & Hudson. pp. 230–233
- [2] Hart, George (2005). *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*. Routledge. pp. 84–85

Khnum

Khnum



the Egyptian god Khnum was usually depicted with the head of a ram.

God of creation and the waters	
Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Elephantine
Symbol	the potter's wheel
Consort	Satis or Neith

Khnum (/kəˈnuːm/; also spelled Khnemu) was one of the earliest Egyptian deities, originally the god of the source of the Nile River. Since the annual flooding of the Nile brought with it silt and clay, and its water brought life to its surroundings, he was thought to be the creator of the bodies of human children, which he made at a potter's wheel, from clay, and placed in their mothers' wombs. He later was described as having moulded the other deities, and he had the titles *Divine Potter* and *Lord of created things from himself*.

General information

Khnum is the third aspect of Ra. He is the god of rebirth, creation and the evening sun, although this is usually the function of Atum. The worship of Khnum centred on two principal riverside sites, Elephantine Island and Esna, which were regarded as sacred sites. At Elephantine, he was worshipped alongside Anuket and Satis as the guardian of the source of the Nile River. His significance led to early theophoric names of him, for children, such as Khnum-Khufwy – *Khnum is my Protector*, the full name of Khufu, builder of the Great Pyramid.^[1]

Khnum has also been related to the deity Min.^[2]

Temple at Elephantine

The temple at Elephantine was dedicated to Khnum, his consort Satis and their daughter Anukis. The temple dates back to at least the Middle Kingdom. By the 11th dynasty Khnum, Satis and Anukis are all attested at Elephantine. During the New Kingdom finds from the time of Ramesses II show Khnum was still worshipped there.^[3]

Opposite Elephantine, on the east bank at Aswan, Khnum, Satis and Anukis are shown on a chapel wall dating to the Ptolemaic time.^[3]

Temple at Esna

In Esna (Latopolis), known as Iunyt or Ta-senet to the Ancient Egyptians, a temple was dedicated to Khnum, Neith and Heka, and other deities.^[3] The temple dates to the Ptolemaic period. Khnum is sometimes depicted as crocodile headed god. Nebt-uu and Menhit are Khnum's principal consorts and Heka is his eldest son and successor. Both Khnum and Neith are referred to as creator deities in the texts at Esna. Khnum is sometimes referred to as the "father of the fathers" and Neith as the "mother of the mothers". They later become the parents of Re, who is also referred to as Khnum-Re.^[4]

Other

The Beit el-Wali temple of Ramesses II contained statues of Khnum, Satis and Anukis, along with statues of Isis and Horus.^[3]

In other locations, such as Her-wer (Tuna el-Gebel perhaps), as the moulder and creator of the human body, he was sometimes regarded as the consort of Heket, or of Meskhenet, whose responsibility was breathing life into children at the moment of birth, as the Ka^[citation needed]

Artistic conventions

In art, he was usually depicted as a ram-headed man at a potter's wheel, with recently created children's bodies standing on the wheel, although he also appeared in his earlier guise as a water-god, holding a jar from which flowed a stream of water. However, he occasionally appeared in a compound image, depicting the elements, in which he, representing water, was shown as one of four heads of a man, with the others being, – Geb representing earth, Shu representing the air, and Osiris representing death.

Khnum in popular culture

As with the other Egyptian Gods, Khnum has appeared at least once in the video game series Serious Sam. In the game series' mythology, the ram-headed God was a member of a race called Khnum. They appear as bosses throughout the most recent additions of the series, and due to their durability and ability to cast fire magic, they are perceived as immortal god-like entities.

Khnum was the name of one of the special abilities (stands) in Jojo's Bizarre Adventures Part III: Stardust Crusaders. Character Oingo used this ability to change his appearance, height, weight, and scent at will to gain advantage over enemies. Along with Khnum the themes of eight other Egyptian Gods were used as abilities in the manga's chapters concerning Egypt.

References

[1] Shaw, Ian. The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt. Oxford University Press. 2000. ISBN 0-19-280458-8

[3] Wilkinson, Richard H., The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt, Thames and Hudson, 2000, ISBN 0-500-05100-3

[4] Kathryn Bard, Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt, Psychology Press, 1999

Khonsu

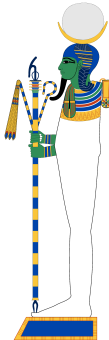
Khonsu



Khonsu in human form

God of youth and the moon

Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Thebes
Symbol	the moon disk, the sidelock
Parents	Amun and Mut



Khonsu, the ancient Egyptian moon-god, was depicted either as a falcon wearing the moon-disk on his head (left) or as the child of Amun and Mut.

Khonsu (alternately **Chonsu**, **Khensu**, **Khons**, **Chons** or **Khonshu**) is an Ancient Egyptian god whose main role was associated with the moon. His name means "*traveller*" and this may relate to the nightly travel of the moon across the sky. Along with Thoth he marked the passage of time. Khonsu was instrumental in the creation of new life in all living creatures. At Thebes he formed part of a family triad with Mut as his mother and Amun his father. At Kom Ombo he was worshipped as son of Sobek and Hathor.^[1]

Mythology

His name reflects the fact that the Moon (referred to as *Iah* in Egyptian) travels across the night sky, for it means *traveller*, and also had the titles *Embracer*, *Pathfinder*, and *Defender*, as he was thought to watch overnight travelers. As the god of light in the night, Khonsu was invoked to protect against wild animals, increase male virility, and to aid with healing. It was said that when Khonsu caused the crescent moon to shine, women conceived, cattle became fertile, and all nostrils and every throat was filled with fresh air.

Khonsu can also be understood to mean *king's placenta*, and consequently in early times, he was considered to slay the king's (i.e. the pharaoh's) enemies, and extract their innards for the king's use, metaphorically creating something resembling a *placenta* for the king. This bloodthirsty aspect leads him to be referred to, in such as the Pyramid texts, as the *(one who) lives on hearts*. He also became associated with more literal placentas, becoming seen as a deification of the royal placenta, and so a god involved with childbirth.

Attributes

Khonsu is typically depicted as a mummy with the symbol of childhood, a sidelock of hair, as well as the menat necklace with crook and flail. He has close links to other divine children such as Horus and Shu. He is sometimes shown wearing a falcon's head like Horus, with whom he is associated as a protector and healer, adorned with the sun disk and crescent moon.^[1]

He is mentioned in the Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts, in which he is depicted in a fierce aspect, but he does not rise to prominence until the New Kingdom, when he is described as the "*Greatest God of the Great Gods*". Most of the construction of the temple complex at Karnak was centered on Khonsu during the Ramesside Period.^[1] His temple at Karnak is in a relatively good state of preservation, and on one of the walls is depicted a cosmogony in which Khonsu is described as the great snake who fertilizes the Cosmic Egg in the creation of the world.^[2]

Khonsu's reputation as a healer spread outside Egypt; a stele records how a princess of Bekhten was instantly cured of an illness upon the arrival of an image of Khonsu.^[3] King Ptolemy IV, after he was cured of an illness, called himself "*Beloved of Khonsu Who Protects His Majesty and Drives Away Evil Spirits*".

Locations of Khonsu's cult were Memphis, Hibis and Edfu.^[1]

Evolution

Khonsu of Thebes The "Maker" of men's destinies — Chonsu-pa-âri-sekher-em-"Uas-t" in hieroglyphs

Khonsu gradually replaced the war-god Monthu as the son of Mut in Theban thought during the Middle Kingdom, because the pool at the temple of Mut was in the shape of a crescent moon. The father who had adopted Khonsu was thought to be Amun, who had already been changed into a more significant god by the rise of Thebes, and had his wife changed to Mut. As these two were both considered extremely benign deities, Monthu gradually lost his more aggressive aspects.

In art, Khonsu was depicted as a man with the head of a hawk, wearing the crescent of the new moon subtending the disc of the full moon. His head was shaven except for the side-lock worn by Egyptian children, signifying his role as *Khonsu the Child*. Occasionally he was depicted as a youth holding the flail of the pharaoh, wearing a menat necklace. He was sometimes pictured on the back of a goose, ram, or two crocodiles. His sacred animal was the baboon, considered a lunar animal by the ancient Egyptians.



Pylon of the Temple of Khonsu at Karnak

Notes

- [1] *"The Oxford Guide: Essential Guide to Egyptian Mythology"*, Edited by Donald B. Redford, p186-187, Berkley, 2003, ISBN 0-425-19096-X
- [2] *"Handbook of Egyptian Mythology"*, Geraldine Pinch, p156, ABC-CLIO, 2002, ISBN 1-57607-242-8
- [3] This incident is mentioned in the opening of chapter one of Bolesław Prus' 1895 historical novel *Pharaoh*.

External links

 Media related to Khonsu at Wikimedia Commons

Kothar-wa-Khasis

Deities of the ancient Near East

Religions of the ancient Near East

Kothar-wa-Khasis (Hebrew: כּוֹתָר וְחָסִים) is a Canaanite god whose name means "Skillful-and-Wise" or "Adroit-and-Perceptive" or "Deft-and-Clever". Another of his names means "Deft-with-both-hands". Kothar is smith, craftsman, engineer, architect, and inventor. He is also soothsayer and magician, creating sacred words and spells, in part because there is an association in many cultures of metalworking deities with magic. The god-name Ka-sha-lu in texts from Ebla suggests that he was known in Syria as early as the late third millennium.

Kothar aids Baal in his battles, as recounted in the Myth of Baal, by creating and naming two magic weapons with which Ba'al defeats Yam. Kothar also creates beautiful furniture adorned with silver and gold as gifts for Athirat. And he builds Ba'al's palace of silver, gold, lapis lazuli, and fragrant cedar wood. One of his significant actions is as the opener of the window through which Ba'al's rains can come and go to fertilize the earth and provide for the continuance of life.

Kothar's abode is Egypt, written in Ugaritic as HKPT - read perhaps as "hikaptah" - derived from the Egyptian for "the house of the ka of Ptah" used for Memphis and paralleled in a poem with KPTR - representing Caphtor. Memphis is the site of the temple of Ptah, the Egyptian god responsible for crafts, whose name means "the Opener".

In his book on the Myth of Baal, Mark Smith notes that there is a possible pun involved in Kothar's epithet "The Opener". According to the Phoenician mythology related by Mochos of Sidon, as cited in Damascius's *De principiis* (Attridge and Oden 1981:102-03), Chusor, Kothar's name in Phoenician Greek, was the first "opener." Assuming the West Semitic root *pth, "to open," Albright argues that this title represents word-play on the name of the Egyptian god Ptah.

Smith further explains Kothar's double abodes as reflexes of metal or craft trade both from Egypt and from the Mediterranean Sea to Ugarit, as Kothar is imputed to be the divine patron of these skills.

Kothar had a minor role in ancient Egyptian religion, as the mythological builder of chapels for Egypt's more important deities.

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- Smith, Mark S. *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*. Volume 1: Introduction with Text, Translation & Commentary of KTU 1.1–1.2. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, Volume LV. Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1994.

Kuk

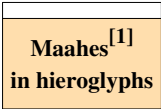
Kuk (also spelled as **Kek** and **Keku**) is the deification of the primordial concept of darkness in Egyptian mythology. In the Ogdoad cosmogony, his name meant *darkness*. As a concept, Kuk was viewed as androgynous, his female form being known as **Kauket** (also spelled as **Keket**), which is simply the female form of the word *Kuk*.^[1]

Like all four dualistic concepts in the Ogdoad, Kuk's male form was depicted as a frog, or as a frog-headed man, and the female form as a snake, or a snake-headed woman. As a symbol of darkness, Kuk also represented obscurity and the unknown, and thus chaos.^[2] Also, Kuk was seen as that which occurred before light, thus was known as the *bringer-in of light*.

References

Maahes

Maahes	
Maahes the God of War	
Major cult center	Taremu & Per-Bast
Symbol	the lion
Parents	Ptah & Bastet



Maahes (also spelled **Mihos**, **Miysis**, **Mios**, **Maihes**, and **Mahes**) was an ancient Egyptian lion-headed god of war,^[2] whose name means "he who is true beside her". He was seen as the son of the feline goddess (Bast in Lower Egypt or Sekhmet in Upper Egypt) whose nature he shared. Maahes was a deity associated with war and weather, as well as that of knives, lotuses, and devouring captives. His cult was centred in Taremu and Per-Bast.

Origin

The first recorded reference to Maahes is from the New Kingdom. Some Egyptologists have suggested that Maahes was of foreign origin;^[3] indeed there is some evidence that he may have been identical with the lion-god Apedemak worshipped in Nubia and Egypt's Western Desert.

As a lion-god and patron, he was also considered the son of Ra and of Bast,^[4] the feline war goddess and patron of Lower Egypt as well as Sekhmet, the lioness war goddess and patron of Upper Egypt. Since his cult was centred in Per-Bast (Bubastis in Greek) or in Taremu (Leontopolis in Greek), he was more known as the son of Bast. As he became a tutelary deity of Egypt, his father was said to be the chief male deity at the time - either Ptah, or Ra who had by this time already merged with Atum into Atum-Ra. In his role of son of Ra, Maahes fought the serpent Apep during Ra's nightly voyage.

Considered to have powerful attributes, feline deities were associated with the pharaohs, and became patrons of Egypt. The male lion hieroglyphic was used in words such as "prince", "mashead", "strength", and "power".

Name

The name of Maahes begins with the hieroglyphs for the male *lion*, although in isolation it also means (*one who can see in front*). However, the first glyph also is part of the glyph for *Ma'at*, meaning *truth* and *order* and so it came to be that Maahes was considered to be the *devourer of the guilty and protector of the innocent*. Some of the titles of Maahes were *Lord of Slaughter*,^[5] *Wielder of the Knife*, and *The Scarlet Lord*.

Depictions

Maahes was pictured as a man with the head of a male lion, occasionally holding a knife and wearing the double crown of Egypt, or the *atef* crown.^[6] Sometimes he was identified with Nefertem^[7] and was shown with a bouquet of lotuses near him, but he also was depicted as a lion devouring a captive.

Sacred animals

Tame lions were kept in a temple dedicated to Maahes in Taremu, where Bast/Sekhmet were worshipped, his temple was adjacent to that of Bast. ^[8] The ancient Greek historian Aelian wrote: "*In Egypt, they worship lions, and there is a city called after them. (...) The lions have temples and numerous spaces in which to roam; the flesh of oxen is supplied to them daily (...) and the lions eat to the accompaniment of song in the Egyptian language*", thus the Greek name of the city *Leontopolis* was derived.

References

- Manfred Lurker, *Dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Devils and Demons*, Routledge 1987, ISBN 0-7102-0877-4
- Alan W. Shorter, (1937) *The Egyptian Gods: A Handbook*, Routledge 1978, ISBN 0-7100-0037-5

Footnotes

- [1] Erman, Adolf & Grapow, Hermann: Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache., Im Auftrage der Deutschen Akademien, Berlin: Akademie Verlag (1971) , II., p.12, II., p.12
- [2] Lurker, *op.cit.*, p.215
- [3] Walter Yust ed., *Encyclopædia Britannica: A New Survey of Universal Knowledge*, 1956, p.54
- [4] Shorter, *op.cit.*, p.134
- [5] Lurker, *op.cit.*, p.215 .
The epithet was used for many Egyptian gods: Thoth (cf. Erik Hornung, *The Secret Lore of Egypt: Its Impact on the West*, 2001, p.6), Wepwawet (cf. *Egypt: Temple of the Whole World : Studies in Honour of Jan Assmann*, Brill 2003, ISBN 90-04-13240-6, p.106), Set (cf. Homer William Smith, *Man and His Gods*, 1952 p.20) etc.
- [6] Shorter, *op.cit.*, p.134
- [7] Shorter, *op.cit.*, p.134
- [8] Caroline Seawright, *Maahes, God of War and Protection, The Leonine Lord of Slaughter...* - map of temples (<http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/maahes.html>)

External links

- Caroline Seawright, *Maahes, God of War and Protection, The Leonine Lord of Slaughter...* (<http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/maahes.html>)

Maat

Maat



Maat was both the goddess and the personification of truth and justice. Her ostrich feather represents truth.

Goddess of truth and justice	
Major cult center	All ancient Egyptian cities
Symbol	the ostrich feather
Consort	Thoth (in some accounts)
Parents	Ra

Maat or **ma'at** (thought to have been pronounced *[muʔ.ʕat]),^[1] also spelled **māt** or **mayet**, was the ancient Egyptian concept of truth, balance, order, law, morality, and justice. Maat was also personified as a goddess regulating the stars, seasons, and the actions of both mortals and the deities, who set the order of the universe from chaos at the moment of creation. Her (ideological) counterpart was Isfet.

The earliest surviving records indicating Maat is the norm for nature and society, in this world and the next, were recorded during the Old Kingdom, the earliest substantial surviving examples being found in the Pyramid Texts of Unas (ca. 2375 BCE and 2345 BCE).^[2]

Later, as a goddess in other traditions of the Egyptian pantheon, where most goddesses were paired with a male aspect, her masculine counterpart was Thoth and their attributes are the same. After the rise of Ra they were depicted together in the Solar Barque.

After her role in creation and continuously preventing the universe from returning to chaos, her primary role in Egyptian mythology dealt with the weighing of souls that took place in the underworld, Duat.^[3] Her feather was the measure that determined whether the souls (considered to reside in the heart) of the departed would reach the paradise of afterlife successfully.

Pharaohs are often depicted with the emblems of Maat to emphasise their role in upholding the laws of the Creator.^[4]

Maat as a principle

Maat as a principle was formed to meet the complex needs of the emergent Egyptian state that embraced diverse peoples with conflicting interests.^[5] The development of such rules sought to avert chaos and it became the basis of Egyptian law. From an early period the King would describe himself as the "Lord of Maat" who decreed with his mouth the Maat he conceived in his heart.

The significance of Maat developed to the point that it embraced all aspects of existence, including the basic equilibrium of the universe, the relationship between constituent parts, the cycle of the seasons, heavenly movements, religious observations and fair dealings, honesty and truthfulness in social interactions.^[6]

The ancient Egyptians had a deep conviction of an underlying holiness and unity within the universe. Cosmic harmony was achieved by correct public and ritual life. Any disturbance in cosmic harmony could have consequences for the individual as well as the state. An impious King could bring about famine or blasphemy blindness to an individual.^[7] In opposition to the right order expressed in the concept of Maat is the concept of *Isfet*: chaos, lies and violence.^[8]



Maat wearing feather of truth

In addition to the importance of the Maat, several other principles within ancient Egyptian law were essential, including an adherence to tradition as opposed to change, the importance of rhetorical skill, and the significance of achieving impartiality, and social justice. In one Middle Kingdom (2062 to c. 1664 BCE) text the Creator declares "*I made every man like his fellow*". Maat called the rich to help the less fortunate rather than exploit them, echoed in tomb declarations: "*I have given bread to the hungry and clothed the naked*" and "*I was a husband to the widow and father to the orphan*".^[9]

To the Egyptian mind, Maat bound all things together in an indestructible unity: the universe, the natural world, the state, and the individual were all seen as parts of the wider order generated by Maat.

The underlying concepts of Taoism and Confucianism resemble Maat at times.^[10] Many of these concepts were codified into laws, and many of the concepts often were discussed by ancient Egyptian philosophers and officials who referred to the spiritual text known as the Book of the Dead.

Maat and the law

There is little surviving literature that describes the practice of ancient Egyptian law. Maat was the spirit in which justice was applied rather than the detailed legalistic exposition of rules (as found in Mosaic law of the 1st millennium BCE). Maat was the norm and basic values that formed the backdrop for the application of justice that had to be carried out in the spirit of truth and fairness. From the 5th dynasty (c. 2510-2370 BCE) onwards the Vizier responsible for justice was called the *Priest of Maat* and in later periods judges wore images of Maat.^[11]

Later scholars and philosophers also would embody concepts from the wisdom literature, or *Sebayt*.^[12] These spiritual texts dealt with common social or professional situations and how each was best to be resolved or addressed in the spirit of Maat. It was very practical advice, and highly case-based, so that few specific and general rules could be derived from them.

During the Greek period in Egyptian history, Greek law existed alongside Egyptian law. The Egyptian law preserved the rights of women who were allowed to act independently of men and own substantial personal property and in time this influenced the more restrictive conventions of the Greeks and Romans.^[13] When the Romans took control

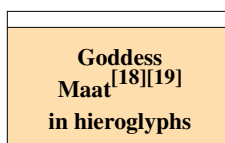
of Egypt, the Roman legal system which existed throughout the Roman Empire was imposed in Egypt.

Maat and scribes

Scribes held prestigious positions in ancient Egyptian society in view of their importance in the transmission of religious, political and commercial information.^[14]

Thoth was the patron of scribes who is described as the one "who reveals Maat and reckons Maat; who loves Maat and gives Maat to the doer of Maat".^[15] In texts such as the Instruction of Amenemope the scribe is urged to follow the precepts of Maat in his private life as well as his work.^[16] The exhortations to live according to Maat are such that these kinds of instructional texts have been described as "Maat Literature".^[17]

Maat as a goddess



Maat was the goddess of harmony, justice, and truth represented as a young woman,^[20] sitting or standing, holding a was scepter, the symbol of power, in one hand and an ankh, the symbol of eternal life, in the other. Sometimes she is depicted with wings on each arm or as a woman with an ostrich feather on her head.^[21] Depictions of Maat as a goddess are recorded from as early as the middle of the Old Kingdom (c. 2680 to 2190 BCE).^[22]

The sun-god Ra came from the primaeval mound of creation only after he set his daughter Maat in place of Isfet (chaos). Kings inherited the duty to ensure Maat remained in place and they with Ra are said to "live on Maat", with Akhenaten (r. 1372-1355 BCE) in particular emphasising the concept to a degree that, John D. Ray asserts, the kings contemporaries viewed as intolerance and fanaticism.^[23] Some kings incorporated Maat into their names, being referred to as *Lords of Maat*,^[24] or *Meri-Maat (Beloved of Maat)*. When beliefs about Thoth arose in the Egyptian pantheon and started to consume the earlier beliefs at Hermopolis about the Ogdoad, it was said that she was the mother of the Ogdoad and Thoth the father.

In the Duat, the Egyptian underworld, the hearts of the dead were said to be weighed against her single "Feather of Ma'at", symbolically representing the concept of Maat, in the *Hall of Two Truths*. A heart which was unworthy was devoured by the goddess Ammit and its owner condemned to remain in the Duat. The heart was considered the location of the soul by ancient Egyptians. Those people with good and pure hearts were sent on to Aaru. Osiris came to be seen as the guardian of the gates of Aaru after he became part of the Egyptian pantheon and displaced Anubis in the Ogdoad tradition.

The weighing of the heart, pictured on papyrus in the Book of the Dead typically, or in tomb scenes, shows Anubis overseeing the weighing and the lioness Ammit seated awaiting the results so she could consume those who failed. The image would be the vertical heart on one flat surface of the *balance scale* and the vertical Shu-feather standing on the other balance scale surface. Other traditions hold that Anubis brought the soul before the posthumous Osiris who performed the weighing.

Temples of Maat

The earliest evidence for a dedicated temple is in the New Kingdom (c. 1569 to 1081 BCE) era, despite the great importance placed on Maat. Amenhotep III commissioned a temple in the Karnak complex, whilst textual evidence indicates that other temples of Maat were located in Memphis and at Deir el-Medina.^[25]

Maat themes found in the *The Book of Going Forth by Day* and on tomb inscriptions

One aspect of ancient Egyptian funerary literature which often is mistaken for a codified ethic of Maat is Spell (Chapter) 125 of the *Book of the Dead* or *Papyrus of Ani* (known to the ancient Egyptians as *The Book of Going Forth by Day*). The lines of these texts are often collectively called the "Forty-Two Declarations of Purity". These declarations varied somewhat from tomb to tomb and so cannot be considered a canonical definition of Maat. Rather, they appear to express each tomb owner's individual practices in life to please



A section of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* written on papyrus showing the "Weighing of the Heart" in the Duat using the feather of Maat as the measure in balance

Maat, as well as words of absolution from misdeeds or mistakes, made by the tomb owner in life could be declared as not having been done, and through the power of the written word, wipe particular misdeed from the afterlife record of the deceased.

Many of the lines are similar, however, and they can help to give the student a "flavor" for the sorts of things which Maat governed — essentially everything, from the most formal to the most mundane aspects of life.

The doctrine of Maat is represented in the declarations to Rekhti-merti-f-ent-Maat and the 42 Negative Confessions listed in the Papyrus of Ani. The following are taken from public domain translations made by E. A. Wallis Budge in the early part of the 20th century; more recent translations may differ in the light of modern scholarship.

42 Negative Confessions (*Papyrus of Ani*)

1. I have not committed sin.
2. I have not committed robbery with violence.
3. I have not stolen.
4. I have not slain men and women.
5. I have not stolen grain.
6. I have not purloined offerings.
7. I have not stolen the property of the god.
8. I have not uttered lies.
9. I have not carried away food.
10. I have not uttered curses.
11. I have not committed adultery, I have not lain with men.
12. I have made none to weep.
13. I have not eaten the heart [i.e I have not grieved uselessly, or felt remorse].

14. I have not attacked any man.
15. I am not a man of deceit.
16. I have not stolen cultivated land.
17. I have not been an eavesdropper.
18. I have slandered [no man].
19. I have not been angry without just cause.
20. I have not debauched the wife of any man.
21. I have not debauched the wife of [any] man. (repeats the previous affirmation but addressed to a different god).
22. I have not polluted myself.
23. I have terrorised none.
24. I have not transgressed [the Law].
25. I have not been wroth.
26. I have not shut my ears to the words of truth.
27. I have not blasphemed.
28. I am not a man of violence.
29. I am not a stirrer up of strife (or a disturber of the peace).
30. I have not acted (or judged) with undue haste.
31. I have not pried into matters.
32. I have not multiplied my words in speaking.
33. I have wronged none, I have done no evil.
34. I have not worked witchcraft against the King (or blasphemed against the King).
35. I have never stopped [the flow of] water.
36. I have never raised my voice (spoken arrogantly, or in anger).
37. I have not cursed (or blasphemed) God.
38. I have not acted with evil rage.
39. I have not stolen the bread of the gods.
40. I have not carried away the khenfu cakes from the Spirits of the dead.
41. I have not snatched away the bread of the child, nor treated with contempt the god of my city.
42. I have not slain the cattle belonging to the god.^[26]

Assessors of Maat

"The Assessors of Maat" are the 42 deities listed in the *Papyrus of Nebsemi*, to whom the deceased make the Negative Confession in the *Papyrus of Ani*.^[27]

Notes

- [1] Information taken from phonetic symbols for Maat, and explanations on how to pronounce based upon modern reals, revealed in (Collier and Manley pp. 2–4, 154)
- [3] Budge. *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 418.
- [7] John Romer, "Testament", pp. 41–42, Guild Publishing, 1988.
- [8] "Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies", Jan Assmann, Translated by Rodney Livingstone, p. 34, Stanford University Press, 2006, ISBN 080474523.
- [12] See Russ VerSteeg, *Law in Ancient Egypt* 19 (Carolina Academic Press 2002)
- [14] Black, p. 130
- [15] Black, p. 131
- [16] Black, p. 132
- [17] Black, p. 157
- [18] Hieroglyphs can be found in (Collier and Manley pp. 27, 29, 154)
- [19] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 416)

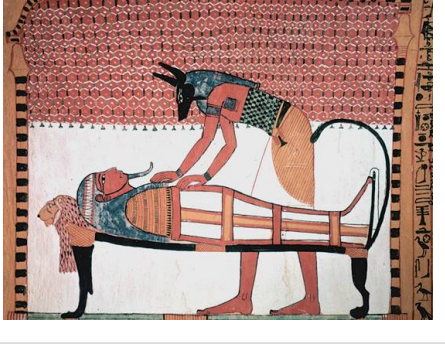
- [21] Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 416)
- [22] "*The Oxford Guide: Essential Guide to Egyptian Mythology*", Edited by Donald B. Redford, p. 190, Berkeley, 2003, ISBN 0-423-19096-X
- [23] "Reflections on Osiris", John D. Ray, p. 64, Profile books, 2002, ISBN 186197 490 6
- [25] "*The Essential Guide to Egyptian Mythology: The Oxford Guide*", p190, Berkeley Reference, 2003, ISBN 0-425-19096-X
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Mafdet

Mafdet



Mafdet's head on the bed where Sennedjem is placed

Parents	Ra
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In early Egyptian mythology, **Mafdet** (also spelled **Maftet**) was a goddess who protected against snakes and scorpions and was often represented as either some sort of feline or mongoose.^[1] She is present in the Egyptian pantheon as early as the First Dynasty. Mafdet was the deification of legal justice, or possibly of execution.^[2] She was also associated with the protection of the king's chambers and other sacred places, and with protection against venomous animals, which were seen as transgressors against Ma'at.

Since venomous animals such as scorpions and snakes are killed by felines, Mafdet was seen as a feline goddess, although it is uncertain whether alternately, she also was meant to be a cat, civet, or a mongoose.^[3] In reflection of the manner in which these animals kill snakes and she was given titles such as, *slayer of serpents*.

The goddess was prominent during the reign of the First Dynasty pharaoh Den, whose image appears on stone vessel fragments from his tomb and is mentioned in a dedicatory entry in the Palermo Stone.^[4] She is also mentioned in the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts as protecting the sun god Re from poisonous snakes.^[5]

Art

In art, Mafdet was shown as a feline, a woman with a feline head, or a feline with the head of a woman. She also was depicted as a feline running up the side of an executioner's staff. It was said that Mafdet ripped out the hearts of wrong-doers, delivering them to the pharaoh's feet, in a similar manner as domestic cats who present people with rodents or birds that they have killed or maimed. During the New Kingdom, Mafdet was seen as ruling over the judgment hall in Duat where the enemies of the pharaoh were decapitated with *Mafdet's claw*. Her cult was eventually replaced by that of Bast, another cat-goddess, a lioness warrior who was seen as the pharaoh's protector, but her feline imagery continued to be associated with the pharaohs in their personal items and the bed upon which their mummies were placed.

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- [2] Wilkinson, Toby A. H. *Early Dynastic Egypt*. p. 251. Routledge, 1999. ISBN 0-203-20421-2
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- [5] Wilkinson, Richard H. *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. p. 196. Thames & Hudson. 2003. ISBN 0-500-05120-8

Mandulis

The Temple of Kalabsha in Nubia was dedicated to **Mandulis** which was a Nubian form of Horus.^[1] A cult dedicated to Mandulis can also be found in Egypt, at Philae.

Mandulis was often depicted wearing an elaborate headdress of ram's horns, cobras and plumes surmounted by sun discs.^[2] He was sometimes shown in the form of a hawk, but wearing a human head.^[3]

References

- [1] Lorna Oakes, *Pyramids, Temples and Tombs of Ancient Egypt: An Illustrated Atlas of the Land of the Pharaohs*, Hermes House:Anness Publishing Ltd, 2003. p.209
- [2] Oakes, p.209
- [3] Oakes, p.209



An image of Mandulis from the Temple of Kalabsha in Nubia

Mehen

In Ancient Egypt the name **Mehen** meaning 'coiled one' refers to a mythological snake-god and to a game.^[1]

Snake god

The earliest references to Mehen occur in the Coffin Texts.^[2] Mehen is a protective deity who is depicted as a snake which coils around the sun god Ra during his journey through the night, for instance in the Amduat.^[3]

In the German-Egyptian dictionary by R. Hannig^[4] it is said that the Mehen (mḥn) or the Mehenet (mḥnt) snake is equivalent to the Ouroboros.

Relationship between snake-god and Mehen game

The precise relationship between the deity and the Mehen game is unknown. For instance it is not known whether the game derives from the mythological character, or the character derives from the game.

It is known that the object known as mehen depicts a game rather than a religious fetish as studies of paintings in tombs and game boards and equipment demonstrate this. The rules and method of playing the game are unknown, although rules have been created in modern times based on assessments of how it may have been played.

References

- [1] Discussion of the game by (<http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/naqada/gameboard.html>) University College London
- [2] The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt by R. Wilkinson ISBN 0-500-05120-8
- [3] The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife by Erik Hornung ISBN 0-8014-8515-0
- [4] Hannig, R. 1995. Die Sprache der Pharaonen: Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch

External links

- Mehen (<http://www.boardgamegeek.com/game/4148>) at BoardGameGeek

Mehet-Weret

Mehetweret^[1]
in hieroglyphs

Mehet-Weret (*mḥ.t-wr.t*) is a goddess of the sky in Ancient Egyptian religion. Her name means "Great Flood".

She was mentioned in the Pyramid Texts. In Ancient Egyptian creation myths, she gives birth to the sun at the beginning of time, and in art she is portrayed as a cow with a sun disk between her horns. She is associated with the goddesses Neith, Hathor, and Isis, all of whom have similar characteristics, and like them she could be called the "Eye of Ra".^[2]



Mehetweret in Tutankhamun's tomb

References

[1] Wörterbuch, II, p.122

[2] Wilkinson, Richard H. (2003). *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. Thames & Hudson. p. 174

Menhit

Menhit^[1]
in hieroglyphs

Menhit /'mɛn.hɪt/ (also spelt Menchit) was originally a foreign war goddess in Egyptian mythology, and the female counterpart, and thus wife, to Anhur. Her name depicts a warrior status, as it means (*she who massacres*).

Due to the aggressive attributes possessed by and hunting methods used by lionesses, most things connected to warfare in Egypt were depicted as leonine, and Menhit was no exception, being depicted as a lioness-goddess.

She also was believed to advance ahead of the Egyptian armies and cut down their enemies with fiery arrows, similar to other war deities^[2] She was less known to the people as Crown goddess.^[3]

In the 3rd Nome of Upper Egypt, particularly at Esna, Menhit was said to be the wife of Khnum and the mother of Heka.

As the centre of her cult was toward the southern border of Egypt, in Upper Egypt, she became strongly identified with Sekhmet, who was originally the lion-goddess of war for Upper Egypt, after unification of the two Egyptian kingdoms, this goddess began to be considered simply another aspect of Sekhmet.^[2]



Menhit on the left with Khnum on the right, shown on the outside wall of the temple at Esna

References

- [1] Wörterbuch, II., p.84
- [2] Hans Bonnet: *Menhit*, in: *Lexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* (English: Lexicon of Egyptian History of Religion) p.451f
- [3] Rolf Felde: *Ägyptische Gottheiten* (English: Egyptian Gods) p.34

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Meret

In Egyptian mythology, **Meret** (also spelled **Mert**) was a goddess who was strongly associated with rejoicing, such as singing and dancing.

In myth

Meret was a token wife occasionally given to Hapy, the god of the Nile. Her name being a reference to this, meaning simply *the beloved*. As token wife, she was usually depicted with the same associations as Hapy, having on her head either the blue lotus for Upper Egypt, or the papyrus plant for Lower Egypt. Since Hapy was the source of bountifulness, Meret was usually depicted with an offering bowl, as she was seen, being his wife, as the symbolic recipient of his generosity.

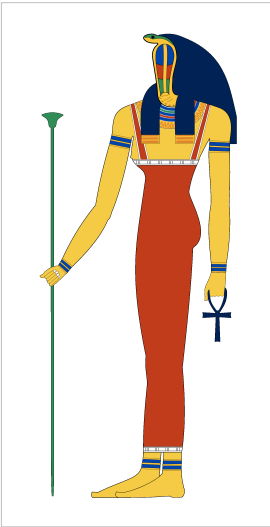
Amongst the lower classes, where nationalism was less important than successful harvest, she was more strongly considered the wife of Hapy than the protectresses of Lower and Upper Egypt, which were more normally his wife in the upper classes. As a deity whose role was to be the symbolic receiver of bounty from the inundation of the Nile, she was strongly associated with rejoicing, such as singing and dancing.^[1] Later stories tell that Meret was the goddess of the eighth hour, in the *Book of Gates*.

References

- [1] Lurker, Manfred. *Dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Devils and Demons*, p. 231. Routledge, 1987. ISBN 0-7102-0877-4.
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Meretseger

Meretseger



Meretseger in Egyptian means *She who loves the Silence*

Goddess of tomb builders and Protector of Royal Tombs

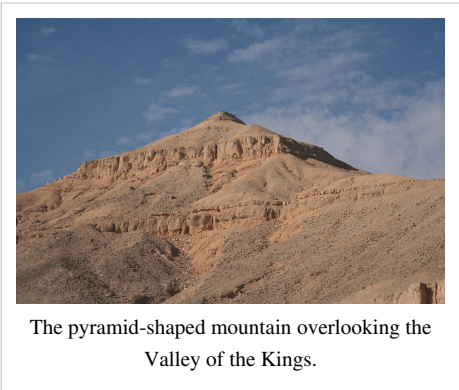
Major cult center

Valley of the Kings, Theban Necropolis

Symbol

Cobra snake

In Egyptian mythology, **Meretseger** (also spelt **Mertseger**), meaning "*she who loves silence*" exerted great authority during the New Kingdom era over the Theban Necropolis and was considered to be both a dangerous and merciful goddess.^[1] She was closely connected with al-Qurn, the pyramid-shaped peak in the Valley of the Kings.^[2] As a cobra-goddess she is sometimes associated with Hathor.^[3]



She was the patron deity of the workers in Deir el-Medina who built the tombs. She punished workers who committed crimes, but healed those who repented. In one instance Meretseger is petitioned to bring relief to one in pain. She answer the prayer by bringing "*sweet breezes*"^[4] A draftsman named Neferabu dedicated a stela to her:

"An ignorant man (I was), without my heart, who did not know good from evil. I was doing misdeeds against the Peak and she taught me a lesson...The peak strikes with the stroke of a savage lion. She is after him who offends her."^[5]

Merestseger takes pity on the man and "*She turned to me in mercy, She caused me to forget the sickness that has been upon me*".^[6]

As a cobra, she spat poison at anyone who tried to vandalise or rob the royal tombs. In art she was portrayed as either a coiled cobra, or as a woman-headed cobra, or rarely as a triple headed cobra, where one head was that of a cobra, one of a woman, and one of a vulture.

Her close association with the Valley of the Kings prevented her becoming anything more than a local deity, and when the valley ceased being in use, so she also ceased being worshipped.^[1]

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Meskhent

Meskhent



Meskhent as a woman with a symbolic cow's uterus on her head

Goddess of childbirth

Symbol	Cow's uterus
Consort	Andjety

In Ancient Egyptian mythology, **Meskhent**, (also spelt **Mesenet**, **Meskhent**, and **Meshkent**) was the goddess of childbirth, and the creator of each child's Ka, a part of their soul, which she breathed into them at the moment of birth. She was worshipped from the earliest of times by Egyptians.

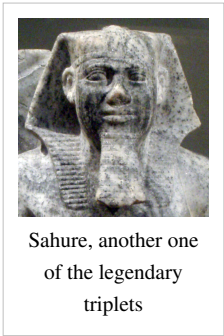
In mythology

In ancient Egypt, women delivered babies while squatting on a pair of bricks, known as *birth bricks*, and Meskhent was the goddess associated with this form of delivery. Consequently, in art, she was sometimes depicted as a brick with a woman's head, wearing a cow's uterus upon it. At other times she was depicted as a woman with a symbolic cow's uterus on her headdress.^[1]

Since she was responsible for creating the Ka, she was associated with fate. Thus later she was sometimes said to be paired with Shai, who became a god of destiny after the deity evolved out of an abstract concept.^[1]

Meskhent features prominently in the last of the folktales in the Westcar Papyrus. The story tells of the birth of Userkaf, Sahure, and Neferirkare Kakai, the first three kings of the Fifth Dynasty, who in the story are said to be triplets. Just after each child is born, Meskhent appears and prophesies that he will become king of Egypt.^[1]

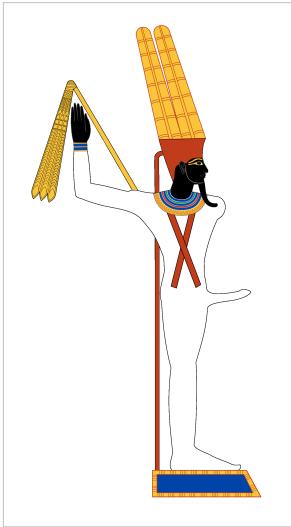
Gallery



References

Min (god)

Min



The fertility dark-skinned god Min, with an erect penis and a flail

God of fertility	
Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Qift
Symbol	the lettuce, the phallus
Consort	Iabet Repit
Parents	Isis and Osiris
Siblings	Horus

Min is an Ancient Egyptian god whose cult originated in predynastic times (4th millennium BCE).^[1] He was represented in many different forms, but was often represented in male human form, shown with an erect penis which he holds in his left hand and an upheld right arm holding a flail. As Khem or Min, he was the god of reproduction; as Khnum, he was the creator of all things, "the maker of gods and men".^[1]

Myths and function

As a god of fertility, he was shown as having black skin. His cult was strongest in Coptos and Akhmim (Panopolis), where in his honour great festivals were held celebrating his “coming forth” with a public procession and presentation of offerings.^[1] His other associations include the eastern desert and links to the god Horus. Flinders Petrie excavated two large statues of Min at Qift which are now in the Ashmolean Museum and it is thought by some that they are pre-dynastic. Although not mentioned by name a reference to 'he whose arm is raised in the East' in the Pyramid Texts is thought to refer to Min.^[2]

His importance grew in the Middle Kingdom when he became even more closely linked with Horus as the deity Min-Horus. By the New Kingdom he was also fused with Amen in the deity Min-Amen-kamutef (Min-Amen - bull of his mother). Min's shrine was crowned with a pair of bull horns.^[3]

As the central deity of fertility and possibly orgiastic rites Min became identified by the Greeks with the god Pan. One feature of Min worship was the wild prickly lettuce *Lactuca virosa* and *Lactuca serriola* of which is the domestic

version *Lactuca sativa* which has aphrodisiac and opiate qualities and produce latex when cut, possibly identified with semen. He also had connections with Nubia. However, his main centres of worship were Qift (Coptos) and Akhmim (Khemmis).

As a god of male sexual potency, he was honoured during the coronation rites of the New Kingdom, when the Pharaoh was expected to sow his seed — generally thought to have been plant seeds, although there have been controversial suggestions that the Pharaoh was expected to demonstrate that he could ejaculate — and thus ensure the annual flooding of the Nile. At the beginning of the harvest season, his image was taken out of the temple and brought to the fields in the *festival of the departure of Min*, when they blessed the harvest, and played games naked in his honour, the most important of these being the climbing of a huge (tent) pole.

In Egyptian art, Min was depicted as wearing a crown with feathers, and often holding his penis erect in his left hand and a flail (referring to his authority, or rather that of the Pharaohs) in his upward facing right hand. Around his forehead, Min wears a red ribbon that trails to the ground, claimed by some to represent sexual energy. The symbols of Min were the white bull, a barbed arrow, and a bed of lettuce, that the Egyptians believed to be an aphrodisiac, as Egyptian lettuce was tall, straight, and released a milk-like substance when rubbed, characteristics superficially similar to the penis.

Even some war goddesses were depicted with the body of Min (including the phallus), and this also led to depictions, ostensibly of Min, with the head of a lioness. Min usually was depicted in an ithyphallic (with an erect and uncovered phallus) style. Christians routinely defaced his monuments in temples they co-opted and Victorian Egyptologists would take only waist-up photographs of Min, or otherwise find ways to cover his protruding penis. However, to the ancient Egyptians, Min was not a matter of scandal - they had very relaxed standards of nudity: in their warm climate, farmers, servants, and entertainers often worked partially or completely naked, and children did not wear any clothes until they came of age.

In the 19th century, there was an alleged erroneous transcription of the Egyptian for *Min* as *hm* ("khem"). Since *Khem* was worshipped most significantly in Akhmim, the separate identity of *Khem* was reinforced, *Akhmim* being understood as simply a corruption of *Khem*. However, *Akhmim* is an alleged corruption of *hm-mnw*, meaning *Shrine of Min*, via the demotic form *šmn*.

Family

In *Hymn to Min* it is said:

"Min, Lord of the Processions, God of the High Plumes, Son of Osiris and Isis, Venerated in Ipu..."

It is not strange that to him are given fertility gods for parents.

Min's wives were Iabet and Repyt (Repit).

References

External links

- Site on Min, with some pictures (<http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/min.html>)

Mnevis

In late Egyptian mythology, **Mnevis** (also written **Mer-wer**) was an aspect of the chief god in the region of Heliopolis, Atum-Ra. The origin and meaning of its name is currently unknown.

Mnevis was identified as being a living bull. This may be a vestige of the sacrifice of kings after a period of reign, who were seen as the sons of Bat or Hathor, the ancient cow deity of the early solar cults. Thus, seen as a symbol of the later sun god, Ra, the Mnevis was often depicted, in art, with the solar disc of their mother, Hathor between its horns.

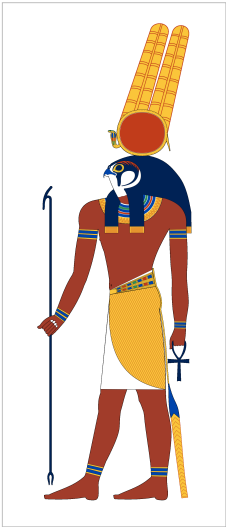
A suitable bull was selected from the area, said to be the living Mnevis bull, and was taken to a special temple, where it was worshipped and its movement used as an oracle. Since the fertile soil of the Nile was so black that the word for *black* (*Khem*) became the Egyptian word for Egypt, and bulls in this region had a tendency to black colouring, the bull selected to be the Mnevis was traditionally completely black, thus being referred to as **Kemwer**, meaning *great black (one)*. When a completely black bull could not be found, they chose one that was completely white, in contrast.

References



Bronze statuette of the bull-headed god of Heliopolis, ca. 4th/3rd century BC.

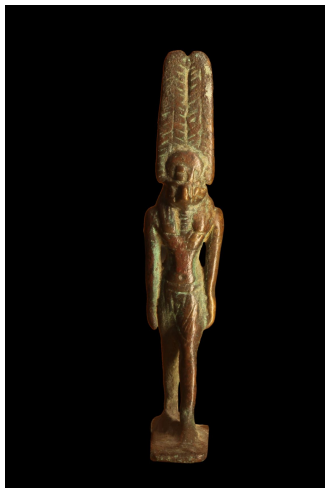
Montu

Monthu or Menthu	
	
the Egyptian war-god Monthu. He was usually depicted as a falcon-headed man with two plumes and a sun disk. He was also said to have the head of a bull when enraged.	
God of warfare, the sun and valor	
Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Hermonthis, Thebes
Symbol	the sun disk, the knife
Consort	Raet-Tawy

In Ancient Egyptian religion, **Montu** was a falcon-god of war. Monthu's name, shown in Egyptian hieroglyphs to the right, is technically transcribed as *mntw*. Because of the difficulty in transcribing Egyptian, it is often realized as **Mont**, **Monthu**, **Montju**, or **Menthu**.

Montu was an ancient god, his name meaning *nomad*, originally a manifestation of the scorching effect of the sun, Ra, and as such often appeared under the epithet *Montu-Ra*. The destructiveness of this characteristic led to him gaining characteristics of a warrior, and eventually becoming a war-god.

Because of the association of raging bulls with strength and war, Montu was also said to manifest himself in a white bull with a black face, which was referred to as the Bakha. Egypt's greatest general-kings called themselves *Mighty Bulls*, the sons of Montu. In the famous narrative of the Battle of Kadesh, Ramesses II was said to have seen the enemy and "raged at them like Montu, Lord of Thebes".



Bronze amulette on display at the Museum of Fine Arts of Lyon.

In Ancient Egyptian art, he was pictured as a falcon-headed or bull-headed man who wore the sun-disc, with two plumes on his head, the falcon representing the sky, and the bull representing strength and war. He would hold various weaponry, including scimitars, bows and arrows, and knives in his hands.

The Temple of Montu at Medamud was probably begun during the Old Kingdom era. During the New Kingdom, large and impressive temples to Montu were constructed in Armant. In fact, the Greek name of the city of Armant was Hermonthis, meaning *the land of Montu*. Earlier temples to Montu include one located adjacent to the Middle Kingdom fortress of Uronarti below the Second Cataract of the Nile, dating to the nineteenth century BCE.

Montu had several consorts, including the goddess Tjenenyet, the goddess Iunit, and a female form of Ra, Raettawy.^[1]

Mentuhotep, a name given to several pharaohs in the Middle Kingdom, means "Montu is satisfied".

References

- [1] Wilkinson, Richard H. (2003). *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. Thames & Hudson. pp. 150, 203

Mut

Mut	
	
A contemporary image of goddess Mut, depicted as a woman wearing the double crown plus a royal vulture headdress, associating her with Nekhbet.	
Goddess of queens and lady of heaven	
Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Thebes
Symbol	the vulture
Consort	Amun
Parents	none (self-created)
Offspring	Khonsu

Mut, which meant *mother* in the ancient Egyptian language,^[1] was an ancient Egyptian mother goddess with multiple aspects that changed over the thousands of years of the culture. Alternative spellings are **Maut** and **Mout**. She was considered a primal deity, associated with the waters from which everything was born through parthenogenesis. She also was depicted as a woman with the crowns of Egypt upon her head. The rulers of Egypt each supported her worship in their own way to emphasize their own authority and right to rule through an association with Mut.

Some of Mut's many titles included *World-Mother*, *Eye of Ra*, *Queen of the Goddesses*, *Lady of Heaven*, *Mother of the Gods*, and *She Who Gives Birth, But Was Herself Not Born of Any*.

Changes of mythological position

Mut was a title of the primordial waters of the cosmos, Naunet, in the Ogdoad cosmogony during what is called the Old Kingdom, the third through sixth dynasties, dated between 2,686 to 2,134 BCE. However, the distinction between motherhood and cosmic water later diversified and led to the separation of these identities, and Mut gained aspects of a creator goddess, since she was the *mother* from which the cosmos emerged.

The hieroglyph for Mut's name, and for *mother* itself, was that of a white vulture, which the Egyptians believed were very maternal creatures. Indeed, since Egyptian white vultures have no significant differing markings between female and male of the species, being without sexual dimorphism, the Egyptians believed they were all females, who conceived their offspring by the wind herself, another parthenogenic concept.

Much later new myths held that since Mut had no parents, but was created from nothing; consequently, she could not have children and so adopted one instead.

Making up a complete *triad* of deities for the later pantheon of Thebes, it was said that Mut had adopted Menthu, god of war. This choice of completion for the triad should have proved popular, but because the *isheru*, the sacred lake outside Mut's ancient temple in Karnak at Thebes, was the shape of a crescent moon, Khonsu, the moon god eventually replaced Menthu as Mut's adopted son.

Lower and upper Egypt both already had patron deities—Wadjet and Nekhbet—respectively, indeed they also had lioness protector deities—Bast and Sekhmet—respectively. When Thebes rose to greater prominence, Mut absorbed these warrior goddesses as some of her aspects. First, Mut became *Mut-Wadjet-Bast*, then *Mut-Sekhmet-Bast* (Wadjet having merged into Bast), then Mut also assimilated Menhit, who was also a lioness goddess, and her adopted son's wife, becoming *Mut-Sekhmet-Bast-Menhit*, and finally becoming *Mut-Nekhbet*.

Later in ancient Egyptian mythology deities of the pantheon were identified as equal pairs, female and male counterparts, having the same functions. In the later Middle Kingdom, when Thebes grew in importance, its patron, Amun also became more significant, and so Amaunet, who had been his female counterpart, was replaced with a more substantial mother-goddess, namely Mut, who became his wife. In that phase, Mut and Amun had a son, Khonsu, another moon deity.



Nineteenth dynasty statue of **Mut**, part of a double statue, c. 1279-1213 BCE, Luxor Museum



Schist statuette of Mut, Late Period, Dynasty XXVI, c. 664-525 BCE

The authority of Thebes waned later and Amun was assimilated into Ra. Mut, the doting mother, was assimilated into Hathor, the cow-goddess and mother of Horus who had become identified as Ra's wife. Subsequently, when Ra assimilated Atum, the Ennead was absorbed as well, and so Mut-Hathor became identified as Isis (either as *Isis-Hathor* or *Mut-Isis-Nekhbet*), the most important of the females in the Ennead (*the nine*), and the patron of the queen. The Ennead proved to be a much more successful identity and the compound triad of Mut, Hathor, and Isis, became known as *Isis* alone—a cult that endured into the 7th century A.D. and spread to Greece, Rome, and Britain.

Depictions

In art, Mut was pictured as a woman with the wings of a white vulture, holding an ankh, wearing the united crown of Upper and Lower Egypt and a dress of bright red or blue, with the feather of the goddess Ma'at at her feet.

Alternatively, as a result of her assimilations, Mut is sometimes depicted as a cobra, a cat, a cow, or as a lioness as well as the white vulture.

In Karnak

There are temples dedicated to Mut still standing in modern-day Egypt and Sudan, reflecting the widespread worship of her, but the center of her cult became the temple in Karnak. That temple had the statue that was regarded as an embodiment of her real *ka*. Her devotions included daily rituals by the pharaoh and her priestesses. Interior reliefs depict scenes of the priestesses, currently the only known remaining example of worship in ancient Egypt that was exclusively administered by women.

Usually the queen, who always carried the royal lineage among the rulers of Egypt, served as the chief priestess in the temple rituals. The pharaoh participated also and would become a deity after death. In the case when the pharaoh was female, records of one example indicate that she had her daughter serve as the high priestess in her place. Often priests served in the administration of temples and oracles where priestesses performed the traditional religious rites. These rituals included music and drinking.

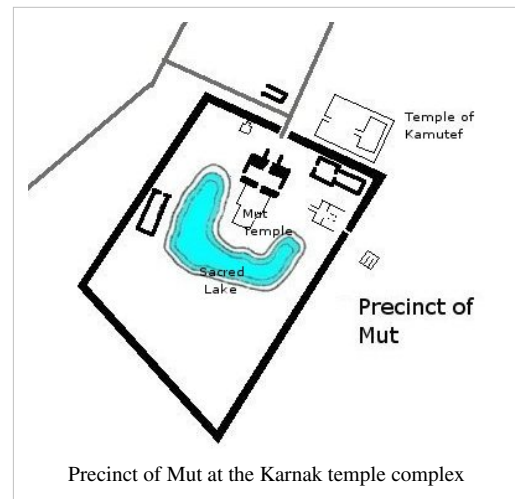
The pharaoh Hatshepsut had the ancient temple to Mut at Karnak rebuilt during her rule in the Eighteenth Dynasty. Previous excavators had thought that Amenhotep III had the temple built because of the hundreds of statues found there of Sekhmet that bore his name. However, Hatshepsut, who completed an enormous number of temples and public buildings, had completed the work seventy-five years earlier. She began the custom of depicting Mut with the crown of both Upper and Lower Egypt. It is thought that Amenhotep III removed most signs of Hatshepsut, while taking credit for the projects she had built.

Hatshepsut was a pharaoh who brought Mut to the fore again in the Egyptian pantheon, identifying strongly with the goddess. She stated that she was a descendant of Mut. She also associated herself with the image of Sekhmet, as the more aggressive aspect of the goddess, having served as a very successful warrior during the early portion of her reign as pharaoh.

Later in the same dynasty, Akhenaten suppressed the worship of Mut as well as the other deities when he promoted the monotheistic worship of his sun god, Aten. Tutankhamun later re-established her worship and his successors



sculpture of Sekmet the lioness deity in the eighteenth dynasty temple to Mut



continued to associate themselves with Mut afterward.

Ramesses II added more work on the Mut temple during the nineteenth dynasty, as well as rebuilding an earlier temple in the same area, rededicating it to Amun and himself. He placed it so that people would have to pass his temple on their way to that of Mut.

Kushite pharaohs expanded the Mut temple and modified the Ramesses temple for use as the shrine of the celebrated birth of Amun and Khonsu, trying to integrate themselves into divine succession. They also installed their own priestesses among the ranks of the priestesses who officiated at the temple of Mut.

The Greek Ptolemaic dynasty added its own decorations and priestesses at the temple as well and used the authority of Mut to emphasize their own interests.

Later, the Roman emperor Tiberius rebuilt the site after a severe flood and his successors supported the temple until it fell into disuse, sometime around the third century A.D. Some of the later Roman officials used the stones from the temple for their own building projects, often without altering the images carved upon them.

Personal piety

In the wake of Akhenaten's revolution, and the subsequent restoration of traditional beliefs and practices, the emphasis in personal piety moved towards greater reliance on divine, rather than human, protection for the individual. During the reign of Rameses II a follower of the goddess Mut donated all his property to her temple and recorded in his tomb:

And he [Kiki] found Mut at the head of the gods, Fate and fortune in her hand, Lifetime and breath of life are hers to command...I have not chosen a protector among men. I have not sought myself a protector among the great...My heart is filled with my mistress. I have no fear of anyone. I spend the night in quiet sleep, because I have a protector.^[2]

References

- [1] Velde, Herman te (2002). Mut. In D. B. Redford (Ed.), *The ancient gods speak: A guide to Egyptian religion* (pp. 238). New York: Oxford University Press, USA.
- [2] "*Of God and Gods*", Jan Assmann, p. 83-84, University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, ISBN 0-299-22554-2
- Jennifer Pinkowski - *Egypt's Ageless Goddess* (*Archaeology* magazine September/October 2006)

Nebethetepet

Nebethetepet in hieroglyphs

Nebethetepet (*nb.t-ḥtp.t*) is an ancient Egyptian goddess. Her name means "Lady of the Offerings" or "Satisfied Lady". She was worshipped in Heliopolis as a female counterpart of Atum, similarly to Iusaaset; was also associated with Hathor. She personified Atum's hand, the female principle of creation; she had no other significance.^[1]

Sources

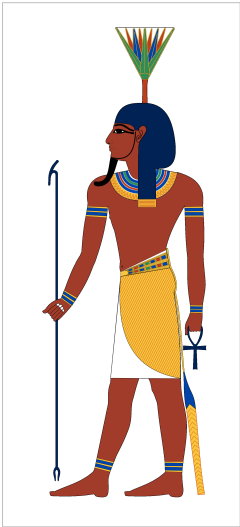
- [1] Richard Wilkinson: *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. London, Thames and Hudson, 2003. ISBN 978-0-500-05120-7, p.156



A stela or Tablet depicting a pharoh making offerings to Re-Horakhty and Nebet-Hetepet (circa 924-889 B.C.)

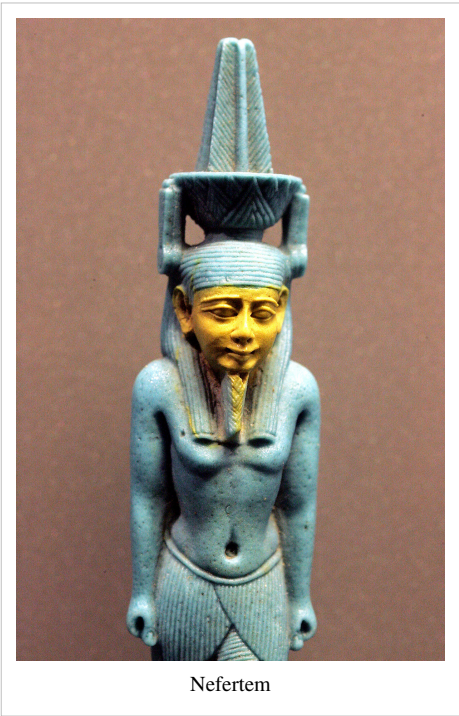
Nefertem

Nefertem



the Memphite god Nefertem with a water-lily headdress as a symbol of fragrance and beauty.

God of healing and beauty	
Major cult center	Memphis
Symbol	the water-lily
Parents	Ptah and Sekhmet
Siblings	Maahes (in some accounts)



Nefertem (/ˈnɛfər.tɛm/; possibly "beautiful one who closes" or "one who does not close"; also spelled Nefertum or Nefer-temu) was, in Egyptian mythology, originally a lotus flower at the creation of the world, who had arisen from the primal waters.^[1] Nefertem represented both the first sunlight and the delightful smell of the Egyptian blue lotus flower, having arisen from the primal waters within an Egyptian blue water-lily, *Nymphaea caerulea*. Some of the titles of Nefertem were "He Who is Beautiful" and "Water-Lily of the Sun", and a version of the *Book of the Dead* says,

"Rise like Nefertem from the blue water lily, to the nostrils of Ra (the creator and sungod), and come forth upon the horizon each day."

Nefertem the child comes from his earth father Nun's black primordial waters, and his sky mother is Nut. When he matures, he is Ra.

Nefertum was eventually seen as the son of the creator god Ptah, and the goddesses Sekhmet and Bastet were sometimes called his mother. In art, Nefertum is usually depicted as a beautiful young man having blue water-lily flowers around his head. As the son of Bast, he also sometimes has the head of a lion or is a lion or cat reclining. The

ancient Egyptians often carried small statuettes of him as good-luck charms.

Gallery



References

- [1] Nefertem page at Ancient Egypt: the Mythology (<http://www.egyptianmyths.net/nefertem.htm>) retrieved June 21, 2008.

Nehebkau

In Egyptian mythology, **Nehebkau** (also spelt **Nehebu-Kau**, and **Neheb Ka**) was originally the explanation of the cause of binding of *Ka* and *Ba* after death. Thus his name, which means *(one who) brings together Ka*. Since these aspects of the soul were said to bind after death, Nehebkau was said to have guarded the entrance to Duat, the underworld.

was one of the more important glyphs in his name, and although it was technically a variation on the glyph for two arms raised in prayer, it also resembles a two-headed snake, and so Nehebkau became depicted in art as a snake with two heads (occasionally with only one). As a two-headed snake, he was viewed as fierce, being able to attack from two directions, and not having to fear as much confrontations. Consequently sometimes it was said that Atum, the chief god in these areas, had to keep his finger on him to prevent Nehebkau from getting out of control. Alternatively, in areas where Ra was the chief god, it was said that Nehebkau was one of the warriors who protected Ra whilst he was in the underworld, during Ra's nightly travel, as a sun god, under the earth.

When he was seen as a snake, he was also thought to have some power over snake-bites, and by extension, other poisonous bites, such as those of scorpions, thus sometimes being identified as the son of Serket, the scorpion-goddess of protection against these things. Alternatively, as a snake, since he was connected to an aspect of the soul, he was sometimes seen as the son of Renenutet, a snake-goddess, who distributed the *Ren*, another aspect of the soul, and of the earth (Geb), on which snakes crawl.

Ka is also the Egyptian word for sustenance, and is associated with spirit.

Nehmetawy

Nehmetawy in hieroglyphs
--

Nehmetawy (*nḥm.t-ʿw3i*; "she who embraces those in need"^[1]) is an ancient Egyptian goddess. She is not very widely known. She was the wife of snake god Nehebu-kau, or in other places of worship, like in Hermopolis, the wife of Thoth. Her depictions are anthropomorph, with a sistrum-shaped headdress, often with a child in her lap.^[2]

Sources

[1] Wörterbuch, II., p.297

[2] Richard Wilkinson: The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt. London, Thames and Hudson, 2003. ISBN 978-0500051207 p.156

Neith

Neith



the Egyptian goddess Neith bearing her war goddess symbols, the crossed arrows and shield on her head, the ankh and the *was* staff. She sometimes wears the Red Crown of Lower Egypt.

Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Sais
Symbol	the bow, the shield, the crossed arrows
Consort	Khnum or Set (mythology)
Offspring	Sobek or Ra and Apep

Neith (/neɪθ/ or /niːθ/; also spelled Nit, Net, or Neit) was an early goddess in the Egyptian pantheon. She was the patron deity of Sais, where her cult was centered in the Western Nile Delta of Egypt and attested as early as the First Dynasty.^[1] The Ancient Egyptian name of this city was Zau.

Neith also was one of the three tutelary deities of the ancient Egyptian southern city of Ta-senet or Iunyt now known as Esna (Arabic: إسنّا), Greek: Λατόπολις (Latopolis), or πόλις Λάτων (Polis Laton), or Λάττων (Laton); Latin: Lato), which is located on the west bank of the River Nile, some 55 km south of Luxor, in the modern Qena Governorate.

Name and symbolism

Neith was a goddess of war and of hunting and had as her symbol, two arrows crossed over a shield. Her symbol also identified the city of Sais.^[2] This symbol was displayed on top of her head in Egyptian art. In her form as a goddess of war, she was said to make the weapons of warriors and to guard their bodies when they died.

Her name also may be interpreted as meaning *water*. In time, this led to her being considered as the personification of the primordial waters of creation. She is identified as a great mother goddess in this role as a creator.

Neith's symbol and part of her hieroglyph also bore a resemblance to a loom, and so later in the history of Egyptian myths, she also became goddess of weaving, and gained this version of her name, *Neith*, which means *weaver*. At this time her role as a creator changed from being water-based to that of the deity who wove all of the world and existence into being on her loom.

In art, Neith sometimes appears as a woman with a weavers' shuttle atop her head, holding a bow and arrows in her hands. At other times she is depicted as a woman with the head of a lioness, as a snake, or as a cow.

Sometimes Neith was pictured as a woman nursing a baby crocodile, and she was titled "Nurse of Crocodiles". As the personification of the concept of the primordial waters of creation in the Ogdoad theology, she had no gender. As mother of Ra, she was sometimes described as the "Great Cow who gave birth to Ra".

Neith was considered to be a goddess of wisdom and was appealed to as an arbiter in the dispute between Horus and Seth.

Attributes



Aegis of Neith, Twenty-sixth dynasty of Egypt.
Museum of Fine Arts of Lyon.

As a goddess of weaving and the domestic arts she was a protector of women and a guardian of marriage, so royal women often named themselves after Neith, in her honor. Since she also was goddess of war, and thus had an additional association with death, it was said that she wove the bandages and shrouds worn by the mummified dead as a gift to them, and thus she began to be viewed as a protector of one of the Four sons of Horus, specifically, of *Duamutef*, the deification of the canopic jar storing the stomach, since the abdomen (often mistakenly associated as the stomach) was the most vulnerable portion of the body and a prime target during battle. It was said that she shot arrows at any evil spirits who attacked the canopic jar she protected.

Mythology

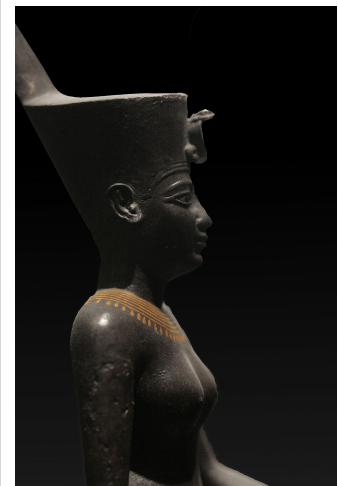
In the late pantheon of the Ogdoad myths, she became identified as the mother of Ra and Apep. When she was identified as a water goddess, she was also viewed as the mother of Sobek, the crocodile.^[3] It was this association with water, i.e. the Nile, that led to her sometimes being considered the wife of Khnum, and associated with the source of the River Nile. She was associated with the Nile Perch as well as the goddess of the triad in that cult center.

As the goddess of creation and weaving, she was said to reweave the world on her loom daily. An interior wall of the temple at Esna records an account of creation in which Neith brings forth from the primeval waters of the Nun the first land *ex nihilo*. All that she conceived in her heart comes into being including the thirty gods. Having no known husband she has been described as "Virgin Mother Goddess":

Unique Goddess, mysterious and great who came to be in the beginning and caused everything to come to be . . . the divine mother of Re, who shines on the horizon . . .^[4]

Proclus (412–485 AD) wrote that the adyton of the temple of Neith in Sais (of which nothing now remains) carried the following inscription:

I am the things that are, that will be, and that have been. No one has ever laid open the garment by which I am concealed. The fruit which I brought forth was the sun.^[5]



Egyptian war goddess Neith wearing the Deshret crown of northern (lower) Egypt, which bears the cobra of Wadjet

It was said that Neith interceded in the kingly war between Horus and Set, over the Egyptian throne, recommending that Horus rule.

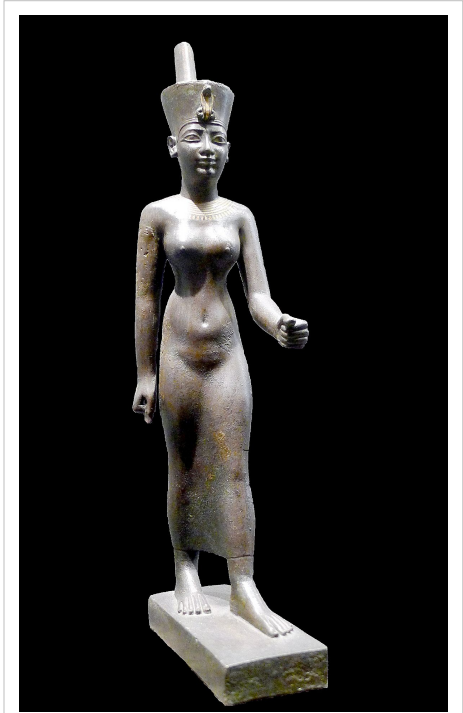
A great festival, called the *Feast of Lamps*, was held annually in her honor and, according to Herodotus, her devotees burned a multitude of lights in the open air all night during the celebration.

Syncretic relationships

A Hellenistic royal family ruled over Egypt for three centuries, a period called the Ptolemaic dynasty until the Roman conquest in 30 B.C. Anouke, a goddess from Asia Minor was worshiped by immigrants to ancient Egypt. This war goddess was shown wearing a curved and feathered crown and carrying a spear, or bow and arrows. Within Egypt, she was later assimilated and identified as Neith, who by that time had developed her aspects as a war goddess.

The Greek historian, Herodotus (c. 484-425 BC), noted that the Egyptian citizens of Sais in Egypt worshipped Neith and that they identified her with Athena. The *Timaeus*, a Socratic dialogue written by Plato, mirrors that identification with Athena, possibly as a result of the identification of both goddesses with war and weaving.^[6]

E. A. Wallis Budge argued that the spread of Christianity in Egypt was influenced by the likeness of attributes between the Mother of Christ and goddesses such as Isis and Neith. Partheno-genesis was associated with Neith long before the birth of Christ and other properties belonging to her and Isis were transferred to the Mother of Christ by way of the apocryphal gospels as a mark of honour.^[7]



Louvre Statuette of Neith

References

- [1] Shaw & Nicholson, op, cit., p.250
- [2] The Way to Eternity: Egyptian Myth, F. Fleming & A. Lothian, p. 62.
- [3] Fleming & Lothian, op. cit.
- [6] *Timaeus* 21e
- [7] "The Gods of the Egyptians: Vol 2", E. A. Wallis Budge, p. 220-221, Dover ed 1969, orig pub 1904, ISBN 0-486-22056-7

Nekhbet

Nekhbet (/ˈnɛkˌbɛt/^[1] also spelt Nekhebit) was an early predynastic local goddess in Egyptian mythology who was the patron of the city of Nekheb, her name meaning *of Nekheb*. Ultimately, she became the patron of Upper Egypt and one of the two patron deities for all of Ancient Egypt when it was unified.

Mythology

She was seen as a goddess who had chosen to adopt the city, and consequently depicted as the Egyptian white vulture, a creature that the Egyptians thought only existed as females (not knowing that, lacking sexual dimorphism, the males are identical). They were presumed to be reproducing via parthenogenesis.

Egypt's oldest oracle was the shrine of Nekhbet at Nekheb, the original *necropolis* or city of the dead. It was the companion city to Nekhen, the religious and political capital of Upper Egypt at the end of the Predynastic period (c. 3200–3100 BC) and probably, also during the Early Dynastic Period (c. 3100–2686 BC). The original settlement on the Nekhen site dates from Naqada I or the late Badarian cultures. At its height, from about 3400 BC, Nekhen had at least 5,000 and possibly as many as 10,000 inhabitants.

The priestesses of Nekhbet were called *muu* (mothers) and wore robes of Egyptian vulture feathers.

Later, as with Wadjet, Nekhbet's sister, became patron of the pharaohs, in her case becoming the personification of Upper Egypt. The images of these two primal goddesses became the protecting deities for all of Egypt, also known as the "Two Ladies" and one of the titles of each ruler was the *Nebty* name, which was associated with these goddesses and beginning as *[s/he] of the Two Ladies...* with the remainder of that title.

In art, Nekhbet was depicted as the white vulture (representing purification), always seen on the front of pharaoh's double crown along with Wadjet. Nekhbet usually was depicted hovering, with her wings spread above the royal image, clutching a shen symbol (representing infinity, *all*, or *everything*), frequently in both of her claws. As patron of the pharaoh, she was sometimes seen to be the mother of the divine aspect of the pharaoh, and it was in this capacity that she was *Mother of Mothers*, and the *Great White Cow of Nekheb*.

The vulture hieroglyph was the uniliteral sign used for the glottal sound (3) including words such as *mother*, *prosperous*, *grandmother*, and *ruler*. In some late texts of the Book of the Dead, Nekhbet is referred to as *Father of Fathers*, *Mother of Mothers*, *who hath existed from the Beginning*, and *is Creatrix of this World*.

When pairing began to occur in the Egyptian pantheon, giving most of the goddesses a husband, Nekhbet was said to become the wife of Hapy, a deity of the inundation of the Nile. Given the early and constant association of Nekhbet with being a good mother, in later myths she was said to have adopted children.



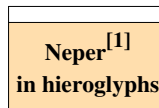
Nekhbet with staff and shen ring.

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Neper (mythology)

For the dimensionless unit, see Neper. For Nepit as an information entropy unit, see Nat (information).



In Egyptian mythology, **Neper** (alts. **Neptra** or **Nepri**) was a god of grain, while Nepit was a goddess of grain, and the female counterpart of Neper.^[2]

In myth

Pictured in human form, Nepri is often depicted as a child suckled by Renenutet.^[3] Nepri's body was dotted to represent grains of corn. The hieroglyphs that write his name similarly include the symbols of grain. Naturally, as *lord of the mouth*, Neper's mother was identified as Renenutet, who gave out the *Ren*, a person's true name, and who was also identified as source of nourishment. In particular, Neper was especially associated with the most used types of grain, namely barley and emmer wheat. His name simply means *lord of the mouth*, a reference to the function of grain as sustenance. Once the myth of Osiris and Isis had begun to be told, since Osiris was now a life-death-rebirth deity, in common with many cultures, his story was associated with the annual harvest, and the annual disappearance of any visible life in the crop. Thus, at this point, Neper became considered merely an aspect of Osiris, a much more significant god, gaining the title *(one who) lives after dying*.

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Nephthys

Nephthys



Nephthys was normally portrayed as a young woman, wearing a headdress in the shape of a house and basket

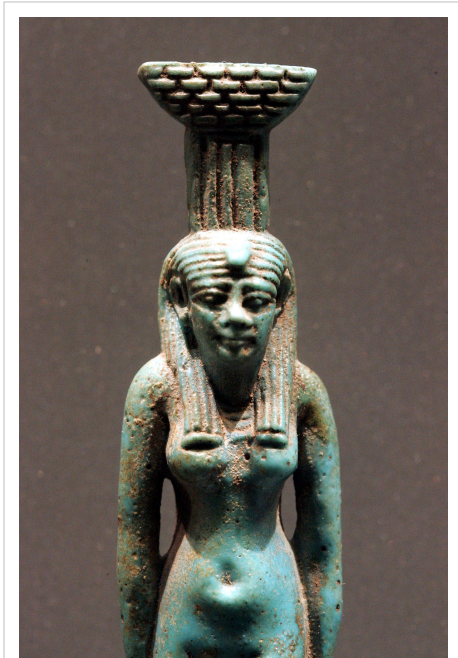
Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	none specifically, Diospolis Parva
Symbol	the house, mummy wrappings
Consort	Set
Parents	Geb and Nut
Siblings	Isis, Osiris, Horus, and Set

Nephthys (/ˈnɛpθɪs/ or /ˈnɛfθɪs/) or **Nebthet** /ˈnɛbˌθɛt/ (Arabic: نيفتيس *Nyftys*) is a member of the Great Ennead of Heliopolis in Egyptian mythology, a daughter of Nut and Geb. Nephthys was typically paired with her sister Isis in funerary rites^[1] because of their role as protectors of the mummy and the god Osiris and as the sister-wife of Set.

Etymology

Nephthys is the Greek form of an epithet (transliterated as Nebet-het, and Nebt-het, from Egyptian hieroglyphs). The origin of the goddess Nephthys is unclear but the literal translation of her name is usually given as "Lady of the House," which has caused some to mistakenly identify her with the notion of a "housewife," or as the primary lady who ruled a domestic household. This is a pervasive error repeated in many commentaries concerning this deity. Her name means quite specifically, "Lady of the [Temple] Enclosure" which associates her with the role of priestess.

This title, which may be more of an epithet describing her function than a given name, probably indicates the association of Nephthys with one particular temple or some specific aspect of the Egyptian temple ritual. Along with her sister Isis, Nephthys represented the temple pylon or trapezoidal tower gateway entrance to the temple which also displayed the flagstaff. This entrance way symbolised the horizon or akhet.



Nephthys - Musée du Louvre, Paris, France

Function

At the time of the Fifth Dynasty Pyramid Texts, Nephthys appears as a goddess of the Heliopolitan Ennead. She is the sister of Isis and companion of the war-like deity, Set. As sister of Isis and especially Osiris, Nephthys is a protective goddess who symbolizes the death experience, just as Isis represented the (re-)birth experience.

Nephthys was known in some ancient Egyptian temple theologies and cosmologies as the "Useful Goddess" or the "Excellent Goddess".^[2] These late Ancient Egyptian temple texts describe a goddess who represented divine assistance and protective guardianship.

Nephthys is regarded as the mother of the funerary-deity Anubis (Inpu) in some myths.^{[3][4]} Alternatively Anubis appears as the son of Bastet^[5] or Isis.^[6]

As the primary "nursing mother" of the incarnate Pharaonic-god, Horus, Nephthys also was considered to be the nurse of the reigning Pharaoh himself.^[7] Though other goddesses could assume this role, Nephthys was most usually portrayed in this function. In contrast Nephthys is sometimes featured as a rather ferocious and dangerous divinity, capable of incinerating the enemies of the Pharaoh with her fiery breath.^[8]

New Kingdom Ramesside Pharaohs, in particular, were enamored of *Mother Nephthys*, as is attested in various stela and a wealth of inscriptions at Karnak and Luxor, where Nephthys was a member of that great city's Ennead and her altars were present in the massive complex.^[9]

Nephthys was typically paired with her sister Isis in funerary rites^[1] because of their role as protectors of the mummy and the god Osiris and as the sister-wife of Seth.

Less well understood than her sister Isis, Nephthys was no less important in Egyptian Religion as confirmed by the work of E. Hornung,^[10] along with the work of several noted scholars.

"Ascend and descend; descend with Nephthys, sink into darkness with the Night-bark. Ascend and descend; ascend with Isis, rise with the Day-bark."

Pyramid Text Utterance 222 line 210.^[11]

Symbolism

In the funerary role, Nephthys often was depicted as a bird of prey called a kite, or as a woman with falcon wings, usually outstretched as a symbol of protection. Nephthys's association with the kite or the Egyptian hawk (and its piercing, mournful cries) evidently reminded the ancients of the lamentations usually offered for the dead by wailing women. In this capacity, it is easy to see how Nephthys could be associated with death and putrefaction in the Pyramid Texts. She was, almost without fail, depicted as crowned by the hieroglyphics signifying her name, which were a combination of signs for the sacred temple enclosure (*hwt*), along with the sign for *neb*, or *mistress (Lady)*, on top of the enclosure sign.^[12]

Nephthys was clearly viewed as a morbid-but-crucial force of heavenly transition, i.e., the Pharaoh becomes strong for his journey to the afterlife through the intervention of Isis and Nephthys. The same divine power could be applied later to all of the dead, who were advised to consider Nephthys a necessary companion. According to the Pyramid Texts, Nephthys, along with Isis, was a force before whom demons trembled in fear, and whose magical spells were necessary for navigating the various levels of Duat, as the region of the afterlife was termed.

It should here be noted that Nephthys was not necessarily viewed as the polar opposite of Isis, but rather as a different reflection of the same reality: eternal life in transition. Thus, Nephthys was also seen in the Pyramid Texts as a supportive cosmic force occupying the night-bark on the journey of Ra, the majestic sun god, particularly when he entered Duat at the transitional time of dusk, or twilight. Isis was Ra's companion at the coming of dawn.

Nephthys and Set

Though it commonly has been assumed that Nephthys was married to Set and they have a son Anubis, recent Egyptological research has called this into question. Levai notes that while Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* mentions the deity's marriage, there is very little specifically linking Nephthys and Set in the original early Egyptian sources. She argues that the later evidence suggests that:

while Nephthys's marriage to Set was a part of Egyptian mythology, it was not a part of the myth of the murder and resurrection of Osiris. She was not paired with Set the villain, but with Set's other aspect, the benevolent figure who was the killer of Apophis. This was the aspect of Set worshiped in the western oases during the Roman period, where he is depicted with Nephthys as co-ruler.^[13]

The saving sister of Osiris

Nephthys plays an important role in the Osirian myth-cycle.

It is Nephthys who assists Isis in gathering and mourning the dismembered portions of the body of Osiris, after his murder by the envious Set. Nephthys also serves as the nursemaid and watchful guardian of the infant Horus. The Pyramid Texts refer to Isis as the "birth-mother" and to Nephthys as the "nursing-mother" of Horus. Nephthys was attested as one of the four "Great Chiefs" ruling in the Osirian cult-center of Busiris, in the Delta^[14] and she appears to have occupied an honorary position at the holy city of Abydos. No cult is attested for her there, though she certainly figured as a goddess of great importance in the annual rites conducted, wherein two chosen females or priestesses played the roles of Isis and Nephthys and performed the elaborate 'Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys'. There, at Abydos, Nephthys joined Isis as a mourner in the shrine known as the Osireion.^[15] These "Festival Songs of Isis and Nephthys" were ritual elements of many such Osirian rites in major ancient Egyptian cult-centers.

As a mortuary goddess (along with Isis, Neith, and Serqet), Nephthys was one of the protectresses of the Canopic jars of the Hapi. Hapi, one of the Sons of Horus, guarded the embalmed lungs. Thus we find Nephthys endowed with the epithet, "Nephthys of the Bed of Life,"^[16] in direct reference to her regenerative priorities on the embalming table. In the city of Memphis, Nephthys was duly honored with the title "Queen of the Embalmer's Shop," and there associated with the jackal-headed god Anubis as patron.^[17]

Nephthys was also considered a festive deity whose rites could mandate the liberal consumption of beer. In various reliefs at Edfu, Dendera, and Behbeit, Nephthys is depicted receiving lavish beer-offerings from the Pharaoh, which she would "return", using her power as a beer-goddess "that [the pharaoh] may have joy with no hangover." Elsewhere at Edfu, for example, Nephthys is a goddess who gives the Pharaoh power to see "that which is hidden by moonlight." This fits well with more general textual themes that consider Nephthys to be a goddess whose unique domain was darkness, or the perilous edges of the desert.

Nephthys could also appear as one of the goddesses who assists at childbirth. One ancient Egyptian myth preserved in the Papyrus Westcar recounts the story of Isis, Nephthys, Meskhenet, and Heqet as traveling dancers in disguise, assisting the wife of a priest of Amun-Re as she prepares to bring forth sons who are destined for fame and fortune.

Nephthys's healing skills and status as direct counterpart of Isis, steeped, as her sister in "words of power," are evidenced by the abundance of faience amulets carved in her likeness, and by her presence in a variety of magical papyri that sought to summon her famously altruistic qualities to the aid of mortals.^[18]



Nephthys - Greco-Roman era painted image on a linen and tempera shroud - c. 300-200 B.C. -
Metropolitan Museum of Art



Isis - Greco-Roman era painted image on a linen and tempera shroud - c. 300-200 B.C. -
Metropolitan Museum of Art

New Kingdom cults of Nephthys

The Ramesside Pharaohs were particularly devoted to Set's prerogatives and, in the 19th Dynasty, a temple of Nephthys called the "House of Nephthys of Ramesses-Meriamun" was built or refurbished in the town of Sepermeru, midway between Oxyrhynchos and Herakleopolis, on the outskirts of the Fayyum and quite near to the modern site of Deshasheh. Here, as Papyrus Wilbour notes in its wealth of taxation records and land assessments, the temple of Nephthys was a specific foundation by Ramesses II, located in close proximity to (or within) the precinct of the enclosure of Set. To be certain, the House of Nephthys was one of fifty individual, land-owning temples delineated for this portion of the Middle Egyptian district in Papyrus Wilbour. The fields and other holdings belonging to Nephthys's temple were under the authority of two Nephthys-prophets (named Penpmer and Merybarse) and one (mentioned) wa'ab priest of the goddess.

While certainly affiliated with the "House of Set," the Nephthys temple at Sepermeru and its apportioned lands (several acres) clearly were under administration distinct from the Set institution.^[19] The Nephthys temple was a unique establishment in its own right, an independent entity. According to Papyrus Wilbour,^[20] another "House of Nephthys of Ramesses-Meriamun" seems to have existed to the north, in the town of Su, closer to the Fayyum region.

Another temple of Nephthys seems to have existed in the town of Punodjem. The Papyrus Bologna records a complaint lodged by a prophet of the temple of Set in that town regarding undue taxation in his regard. After making an introductory appeal to "Re-Horakhte, Set, and Nephthys" for the ultimate resolution of this issue by the royal Vizier, the prophet (named Pra'emhab) laments his workload. He notes his obvious administration of the "House of Set" and adds: "I am also responsible for the ship, and I am responsible likewise for the House of Nephthys, along with a heap of other temples."^[21]

As "Nephthys of Ramesses-Meriamun," the goddess and her shrines were under the particular endorsement of Ramesses II. The foundations of the Set and Nephthys temples at Sepermeru finally were discovered and identified in the 1980s, and the Nephthys temple was a self-sustaining temple complex within the Set enclosure.^[22]

There can be little doubt that a cult of Nephthys existed in the temple and great town of Herakleopolis, north of Sepermeru. A near life-sized statue of Nephthys (currently housed in the Louvre) boasts a curiously altered inscription. The basalt image originally was stationed at Medinet-Habu, as part of the cultic celebration of the Pharaonic "Sed-Festival," but was transferred at some point to Herakleopolis and the temple of Herishef. The cult-image's inscription originally pertained to "Nephthys, Foremost of the Sed [Festival] in the Booth of Annals" (at Medinet-Habu), but was re-inscribed or re-dedicated to "Nephthys, Foremost of the [Booths of] Herakleopolis." A "prophet of Nephthys" is indeed attested for the town of Herakleopolis in the 30th Dynasty.^[23]

Chief goddess of Nome VII

Nephthys was considered the unique protectress of the Sacred Phoenix, or the Bennu Bird. This role may have stemmed from an early association in her native Heliopolis, which was renowned for its "House of the Bennu" temple. In this role, Nephthys was given the name "Nephthys-Kheresket," and a wealth of temple texts from Edfu, Dendera, Philae, Kom Ombo, El Qa'la, Esna, and others corroborate the late identification of Nephthys as the supreme goddess of Upper Egyptian Nome VII, where another shrine existed in honor of the Bennu. Nephthys also was the goddess of the "Mansion of the Sistrum" in Hwt-Sekhem (Gr. Diospolis Parva), the chief city of Nome VII. There, Nephthys was the primary protectress of the resident Osirian relic, of the Bennu Bird, and of the local Horus/Osiris manifestation, the god Neferhotep.^[24]

Nephthys was most widely and usually worshipped in ancient Egypt as part of a consortium of temple deities. Therefore, it should not surprise us that her cult images could likely be found as part of the divine entourage in temples at Kharga, Kellis, Deir el-Hagar, Koptos, Dendera, Philae, Sebennytos, Busiris, Shenhur, El Qa'la, Letopolis, Heliopolis, Abydos, Thebes, Dakleh Oasis, and indeed throughout Egypt.^[25] In most cases, Nephthys found her

typical place as part of a triad alongside Osiris and Isis, or Isis and Horus, or Isis and Min, or as part of a quartet of deities. It is perhaps in this way that Nephthys best fulfilled her role as an important national deity whose ideal function was to provide powerful assistance to her associates in a great variety of temple cults—a truly "Useful" and "Excellent" goddess, as her primary epithets reflect.

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Nu (mythology)

Naunet redirects here.

Nu (/nuː/; "watery one") or **Nun** (/nʌn/ or /nuːn/; "inert one") is the deification of the primordial watery abyss in Egyptian mythology. In the Ogdoad cosmogony, the word *nu* means "abyss".

The Ancient Egyptians envisaged the oceanic abyss of the Nun as surrounding a bubble in which the sphere of life is encapsulated, representing the deepest mystery of their cosmogony.^[1] In Ancient Egyptian creation accounts the original mound of land comes forth from the waters of the Nun.^[2] The Nun is the source of all that appears in a differentiated world, encompassing all aspects of divine and earthly existence. In the Ennead cosmogony Nun is perceived as transcendent at the point of creation alongside Atum the creator god.^[1]



Naunet and Nun

Nu was shown usually as male but also had aspects that could be represented as female or male. **Nunet** (/ˈnuː.nɛt/; also spelt Naunet) is the female aspect, which is the name Nu with a female gender ending. The male aspect, Nun, is written with a male gender ending. As with the primordial concepts of the Ogdoad, Nu's male aspect was depicted as a frog, or a frog-headed man. In Ancient Egyptian art, Nun also appears as a bearded man, with blue-green skin, representing water. Naunet is represented as a snake or snake-headed woman.

Beginning with the Middle Kingdom Nun is described as "the Father of the Gods" and he is depicted on temple walls throughout the rest of Ancient Egyptian religious history.^[1]

The Ogdoad includes with Naunet and Nun, Amaunet and Amun, Hauhet and Heh, and Kauket with Kuk. Like the other Ogdoad deities, Nu did not have temples or any center of worship. Even so, Nu was sometimes

represented by a sacred lake, or, as at Abydos, by an underground stream.

In the 12th Hour of the Book of Gates Nu is depicted with upraised arms holding a "solar bark" (or barque, a boat). The boat is occupied by eight deities, with the scarab deity Khepri standing in the middle surrounded by the seven other deities.

During the late period when Egypt became occupied the negative aspect of the Nun (chaos) became the dominant perception, reflecting the forces of disorder that were set loose in the country.^[1]

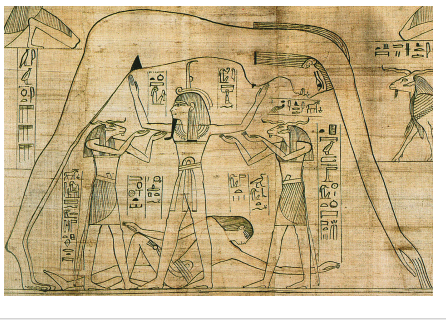
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Nut (goddess)

Nut



Nut, goddess of sky supported by Shu the god of air, and the ram-headed Heh deities, while the earth god Geb reclines beneath

Goddess of Sky	
Name in hieroglyphs	
Symbol	sky, star
Consort	Geb
Parents	Shu and Tefnut
Siblings	Geb
Offspring	Osiris, Isis, Set, Nephthys, and sometimes Horus

Nut (/nʌt/ or /nuːt/)^[1] or **Neuth** (/nuːθ/ or /njuːθ/; also spelled Nuit or Newet) was the goddess of the sky in the Ennead of Egyptian mythology. She was seen as a star-covered nude woman arching over the earth,^[2] or as a cow.

Goddess of the sky

Nut (nwt)
in hieroglyphs

Nut is a daughter of Shu and Tefnut. She is Geb's sister. She has four or five children: Osiris, Set, Isis, Nephthys, and sometimes Horus. Her name is translated to mean 'sky'^{[3][4]} and she is considered one of the oldest deities among the Egyptian pantheon,^[5] with her origin being found on the creation story of Heliopolis. She was originally the goddess of the nighttime sky, but eventually became referred to as simply the sky goddess. Her headdress was the hieroglyphic of part of her name, a pot, which may also symbolize the uterus. Mostly depicted in nude human form, Nut was also sometimes depicted in the form of a cow whose great body formed the sky and heavens, a sycamore tree, or as a giant sow, suckling many piglets (representing the stars).

Origins



Great goddess Nut with her wings stretched across a coffin

A sacred symbol of Nut was the ladder, used by Osiris to enter her heavenly skies. This ladder-symbol was called *maqet* and was placed in tombs to protect the deceased, and to invoke the aid of the deity of the dead. Nut and her brother, Geb, may be considered enigmas in the world of mythology. In direct contrast to most other mythologies which usually develop a sky father associated with an Earth mother (or Mother Nature), she personified the sky and he the Earth.^[6]

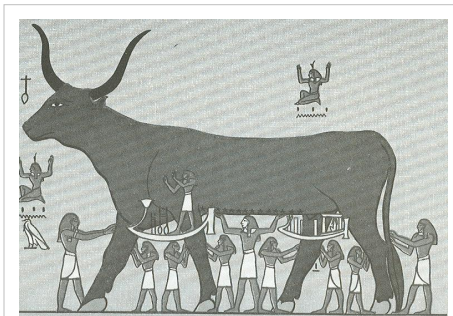
Nut appears in the creation myth of Heliopolis which involves several goddesses who play important roles: Tefnut (Tefenet) is a personification of moisture, who

mated with Shu (Air) and then gave birth to Sky as the goddess Nut, who mated with her brother Earth, as Geb. From the union of Geb and Nut came, among others, the most popular of Egyptian goddesses, Isis, the mother of Horus, whose story is central to that of her brother-husband, the resurrection god Osiris. Osiris is killed by his brother Seth and scattered over the Earth in 14 pieces which Isis gathers up and puts back together. Osiris then climbs a ladder into his mother Nut for safety and eventually becomes king of the dead.^[7]

A huge cult developed about Osiris that lasted well into Roman times. Isis was her husband's queen in the underworld and the theological basis for the role of the queen on earth. It can be said that she was a version of the great goddess Hathor. Like Hathor she not only had death and rebirth associations, but was the protector of children and the goddess of childbirth.^[7]

Myth of Nut and Ra

Ra, the sun god, was the second to rule the world, according to the reign of the gods. Ra was a strong ruler but he feared anyone taking his throne. When he discovered that Nut was to have children he was furious. He decreed, "Nut shall not give birth any day of the year." At that time, the year was only 360 days. Nut spoke to Thoth, god of wisdom, and he had a plan. Thoth gambled with Khonshu, god of the moon, whose light rivaled that of Ra's. Every time Khonshu lost, he had to give Thoth some of his moonlight. Khonshu lost so many times that Thoth had enough moonlight to make 5 extra days. Since these days were not part of the year, Nut could have her children. She had 5:



The sky goddess Nut depicted as a cow

Osiris, Horus the Elder, Set, Isis, and Nephthys. When Ra found out, he was furious. He separated Nut from her husband Geb for all eternity. Her father, Shu, was to keep them apart. Still, Nut did not regret her decision.^[citation needed]

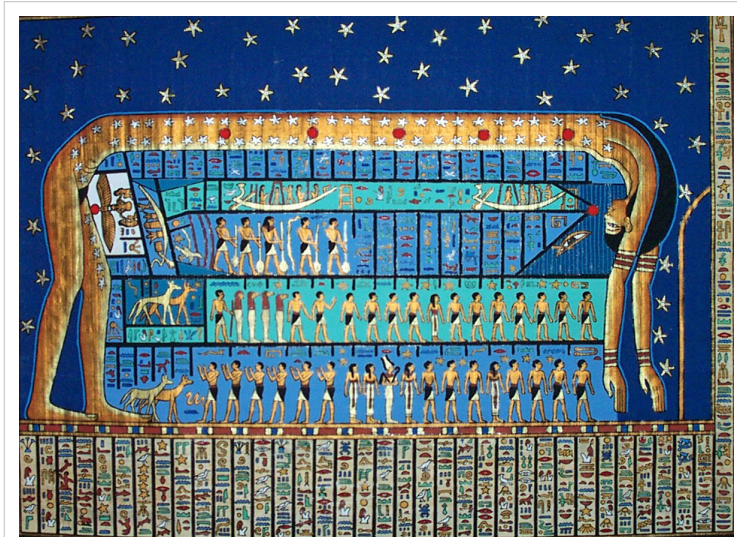
Some of the titles of Nut were:

- *Coverer of the Sky*: Nut was said to be covered in stars touching the different points of her body.
- *She Who Protects*: Among her jobs was to envelop and protect Ra, the sun god.^[8]
- *Mistress of All* or "She who Bore the Gods": Originally, Nut was said to be laying on top of Geb (Earth) and continually having intercourse. During this time she birthed four children: Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys.^[9] A fifth child named Arueris is mentioned by Plutarch.^[10] He was the Egyptian counterpart to the Greek god Apollo, who was made syncretic with Horus in the Hellenistic era as 'Horus the Elder'.^[11] The Ptolemaic temple of Edfu

is dedicated to Horus the Elder and there he is called the son of Nut and Geb, brother of Osiris, and the eldest son of Geb.^[12]

- *She Who Holds a Thousand Souls*: Because of her role in the re-birthing of Ra every morning and in her son Osiris's resurrection, Nut became a key god in many of the myths about the after-life.^[8]

Role



The Sky Goddess Nut arched protectively over the Earth and all of its inhabitants

Nut was the goddess of the sky and all heavenly bodies, a symbol of protecting the dead when they enter the after life. According to the Egyptians, during the day, the heavenly bodies—such as the sun and moon—would make their way across her body. Then, at dusk, they would be swallowed, pass through her belly during the night, and be reborn at dawn.^[13]

Nut is also the barrier separating the forces of chaos from the ordered cosmos in the world. She was pictured as a woman arched on her toes and fingertips over the earth; her body portrayed as a star-filled sky. Nut's fingers and toes were believed to touch the

four cardinal points or directions of north, south, east, and west.

Because of her role in saving Osiris, Nut was seen as a friend and protector of the dead, who appealed to her as a child appeals to its mother: "O my Mother Nut, stretch Yourself over me, that I may be placed among the imperishable stars which are in You, and that I may not die." Nut was thought to draw the dead into her star-filled sky, and refresh them with food and wine: "I am Nut, and I have come so that I may enfold and protect you from all things evil."^[14]

She was often painted on the inside lid of the sarcophagus, protecting the deceased. The vault of tombs often were painted dark blue with many stars as a representation of Nut. The Book of the Dead says, "Hail, thou Sycamore Tree of the Goddess Nut! Give me of the water and of the air which is in thee. I embrace that throne which is in Unu, and I keep guard over the Egg of Nekek-ur. It flourisheth, and I flourish; it liveth, and I live; it snuffeth the air, and I snuff the air, I the Osiris Ani, whose word is truth, in peace."^[14]

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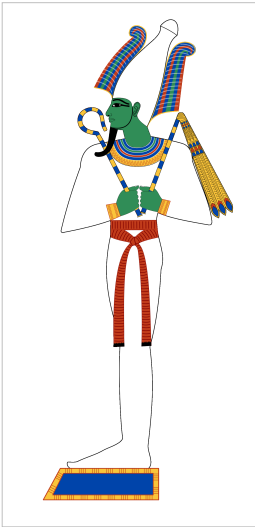
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External links

 Media related to Nut (goddess) at Wikimedia Commons

Osiris

Osiris



Osiris, lord of the dead. His green skin symbolizes re-birth.

God of the afterlife	
Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Abydos
Symbol	Crook and flail
Consort	Isis
Parents	Geb and Nut
Siblings	Isis, Set, Nephthys, (and Arueris as per Plutarch)

Osiris (/oʊˈsaɪərɪs/; Ancient Greek: Ὀσίρις, also **Usiris**; the Egyptian language name is variously transliterated **Asar**, **Asari**, **Aser**, **Ausar**, **Ausir**, **Wesir**, **Usir**, **Usire** or **Ausare**) is an Egyptian god, usually identified as the god of the afterlife, the underworld and the dead. He was classically depicted as a green-skinned man with a pharaoh's beard, partially mummy-wrapped at the legs, wearing a distinctive crown with two large ostrich feathers at either side, and holding a symbolic crook and flail.

Osiris was at times considered the oldest son of the Earth god Geb,^[1] and the sky goddess Nut, as well as being brother and husband of Isis, with Horus being considered his posthumously begotten son.^[1] He was also associated with the epithet **Khenti-Amentiu**, which means "*Foremost of the Westerners*" — a reference to his kingship in the land of the dead.^[1] As ruler of the dead, Osiris was also sometimes called "*king of the living*", since the Ancient Egyptians considered the blessed dead "*the living ones*".^[2]

Osiris is first attested in the middle of the Fifth dynasty of Egypt, although it is likely that he was worshipped much earlier;^[3] the term **Khenti-Amentiu** dates to at least the first dynasty, also as a pharaonic title. Most information we have on the myths of Osiris is derived from allusions contained in the Pyramid Texts at the end of the Fifth Dynasty, later New Kingdom source documents such as the Shabaka Stone and the *Contending of Horus and Seth*, and much later, in narrative style from the writings of Greek authors including Plutarch^[4] and Diodorus Siculus.^[5]

Osiris was considered not only a merciful judge of the dead in the afterlife, but also the underworld agency that granted all life, including sprouting vegetation and the fertile flooding of the Nile River. He was described as the "*Lord of love*",^[6] "*He Who is Permanently Benign and Youthful*"^[7] and the "*Lord of Silence*".^[8] The Kings of Egypt

were associated with Osiris in death — as Osiris rose from the dead they would, in union with him, inherit eternal life through a process of imitative magic. By the New Kingdom all people, not just pharaohs, were believed to be associated with Osiris at death, if they incurred the costs of the assimilation rituals.^[9]

Through the hope of new life after death, Osiris began to be associated with the cycles observed in nature, in particular vegetation and the annual flooding of the Nile, through his links with Orion and Sirius at the start of the new year.^[7] Osiris was widely worshipped as Lord of the Dead until the suppression of the Egyptian religion during the Christian era.^{[10][11]}

Appearance

Osiris is represented in his most developed form of iconography wearing the *Atef* crown, which is similar to the White crown of Upper Egypt, but with the addition of two curling ostrich feathers at each side (see also Atef crown (hieroglyph)). He also carries the crook and flail. The crook is thought to represent Osiris as a shepherd god. The symbolism of the flail is more uncertain with shepherds whip, fly-whisk, or association with the god Andjety of the ninth nome of Lower Egypt proposed.^[7]

He was commonly depicted as a green (the color of rebirth) or black (alluding to the fertility of the Nile floodplain) complexioned pharaoh, in mummiform (wearing the trappings of mummification from chest downward).^[12] He was also depicted rarely as a lunar god with a crown encompassing the moon.

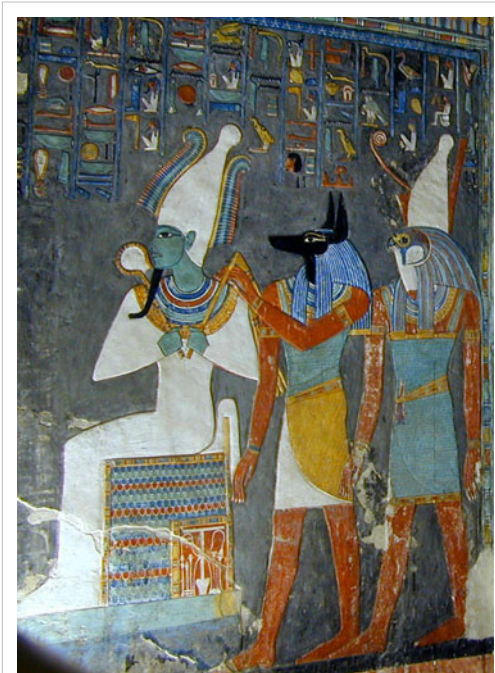
Early mythology

The Pyramid Texts describe early conceptions of an afterlife in terms of eternal travelling with the sun god amongst the stars. Amongst these mortuary texts, at the beginning of the 4th dynasty, is found: "*An offering the king gives and Anubis*". By the end of the 5th dynasty, the formula in all tombs becomes "*An offering the king gives and Osiris*".^[13]

Father of Horus

Osiris is the mythological father of the god Horus, whose conception is described in the Osiris myth, a central myth in ancient Egyptian belief. The myth described Osiris as having been killed by his brother Set, who wanted Osiris' throne. Isis joined the fragmented pieces of Osiris, but the only body part missing was the phallus. Isis fashioned a golden phallus, and briefly brought Osiris back to life by use of a spell that she learned from her father. This spell gave her time to become pregnant by Osiris before he again died. Isis later gave birth to Horus. As such, since Horus was born after Osiris' resurrection, Horus became thought of as a representation of new beginnings and the vanquisher of the evil Set.

Ptah-Seker (who resulted from the identification of Ptah with Seker), god of re-incarnation, thus gradually became identified with Osiris, the two becoming **Ptah-Seker-Osiris**. As the sun was thought to spend the night in the underworld, and was subsequently *re-incarnated* every morning, Ptah-Seker-Osiris was identified as both king of the underworld, and god of reincarnation.



The gods Osiris, Anubis, and Horus, from a tomb painting.

Ram god

Banebdjed
(*b3-nb-dd*)
in hieroglyphs

Osiris' soul, or rather his *Ba*, was occasionally worshipped in its own right, almost as if it were a distinct god, especially in the Delta city of Mendes. This aspect of Osiris was referred to as *Banebdjedet*, which is grammatically feminine (also spelt "*Banebded*" or "*Banebdjed*"), literally "the *ba* of the lord of the *djed*", which roughly means *The soul of the lord of the pillar of stability*. The *djed*, a type of pillar, was usually understood as the backbone of Osiris, and, at the same time, as the Nile, the backbone of Egypt.

The Nile, supplying water, and Osiris (strongly connected to the vegetation) who died only to be resurrected, represented continuity and stability. As *Banebdjed*, Osiris was given epithets such as *Lord of the Sky* and *Life of the (sun god) Ra*, since Ra, when he had become identified with Atum, was considered Osiris' ancestor, from whom his regal authority is inherited. *Ba* does not mean "soul" in the western sense, and has to do with power, reputation, force of character, especially in the case of a god.

Since the *ba* was associated with power, and also happened to be a word for ram in Egyptian, Banebdjed was depicted as a ram, or as Ram-headed. A living, sacred ram, was kept at Mendes and worshipped as the incarnation of the god, and upon death, the rams were mummified and buried in a ram-specific necropolis. Banebdjed was consequently said to be Horus' father, as Banebdjed was an aspect of Osiris.

Regarding the association of Osiris with the ram, the god's traditional crook and flail are the instruments of the shepherd, which has suggested to some scholars also an origin for Osiris in herding tribes of the upper Nile. The crook and flail were originally symbols of the minor agricultural deity Andjety, and passed to Osiris later. From Osiris, they eventually passed to Egyptian kings in general as symbols of divine authority.

Mythology



The family of Osiris. Osiris on a lapis lazuli pillar in the middle, flanked by Horus on the left and Isis on the right (22nd dynasty, Louvre, Paris)

The cult of Osiris (who was a god chiefly of regeneration and rebirth) had a particularly strong interest in the concept of immortality. Plutarch recounts one version of the myth in which Set (Osiris' brother), along with the Queen of

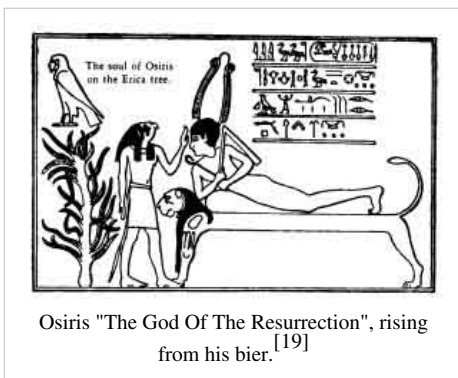
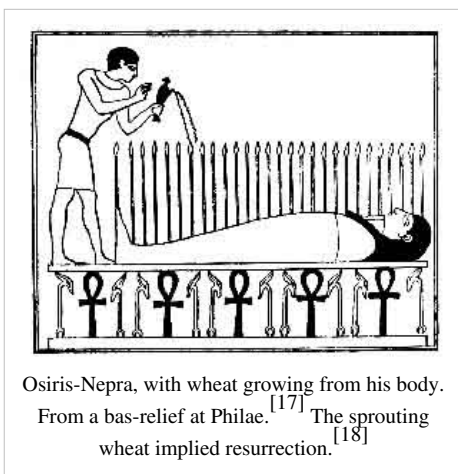
Ethiopia, conspired with 72 accomplices to plot the assassination of Osiris.^[14] Set fooled Osiris into getting into a box, which Set then shut, sealed with lead, and threw into the Nile (sarcophagi were based on^[citation needed] the box in this myth). Osiris' wife, Isis, searched for his remains until she finally found him embedded in a tamarind tree trunk, which was holding up the roof of a palace in Byblos on the Phoenician coast. She managed to remove the coffin and open it, but Osiris was already dead.

In one version of the myth, she used a spell learned from her father and brought him back to life so he could impregnate her. Afterwards he died again and she hid his body in the desert. Months later, she gave birth to Horus. While she raised Horus, Set was hunting one night and came across the body of Osiris.

Enraged, he tore the body into fourteen pieces and scattered them throughout the land. Isis gathered up all the parts of the body, less the phallus (which was eaten by a catfish) and bandaged them together for a proper burial. The gods were impressed by the devotion of Isis and resurrected Osiris as the god of the underworld. Because of his death and resurrection, Osiris was associated with the flooding and retreating of the Nile and thus with the crops along the Nile valley.

Diodorus Siculus gives another version of the myth in which Osiris was described as an ancient king who taught the Egyptians the arts of civilization, including agriculture, then travelled the world with his sister Isis, the satyrs, and the nine muses, before finally returning to Egypt. Osiris was then murdered by his evil brother Typhon, who was identified with Set. Typhon divided the body into twenty-six pieces, which he distributed amongst his fellow conspirators in order to implicate them in the murder. Isis and Hercules (Horus) avenged the death of Osiris and slew Typhon. Isis recovered all the parts of Osiris' body, except the phallus, and secretly buried them. She made replicas of them and distributed them to several locations, which then became centres of Osiris worship.^{[15][16]}

Death and institution as god of the dead



Plutarch and others have noted that the sacrifices to Osiris were "gloomy, solemn, and mournful..." (Isis and Osiris, 69) and that the great mystery festival, celebrated in two phases, began at Abydos on the 17th of Athyr^[20] (November 13) commemorating the death of the god, which was also the same day that grain was planted in the ground. "The death of the grain and the death of the god were one and the same: the cereal was identified with the god who came from heaven; he was the bread by which man lives. The resurrection of the god symbolized the rebirth of the grain." (Larson 17) The annual festival involved the construction of "Osiris Beds" formed in shape of Osiris, filled with soil and sown with seed.^[21]

The germinating seed symbolized Osiris rising from the dead. An almost pristine example was found in the tomb of Tutankhamun by Howard Carter.^[22]

The first phase of the festival was a public drama depicting the murder and dismemberment of Osiris, the search of his body by Isis, his triumphal return as the resurrected god, and the battle in which Horus defeated Set. This was all presented by skilled actors as a literary history, and was the main method of recruiting cult membership.

According to Julius Firmicus Maternus of the fourth century, this play was re-enacted each year by worshippers who "beat their breasts and

gashed their shoulders.... When they pretend that the mutilated remains of the god have been found and rejoined...they turn from mourning to rejoicing." (*De Errore Profanorum*).

The passion of Osiris was reflected in his name 'Wennefer' ("the one who continues to be perfect"), which also alludes to his post mortem power.^[12]

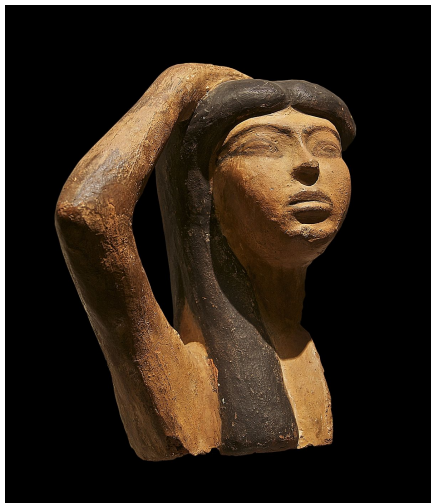
Ikhernofret Stela

Much of the extant information about the Passion of Osiris can be found on the Ikhernofret Stela at Abydos erected in the 12th Dynasty by Ikhernofret (also I-Kher-Nefert), possibly a priest of Osiris or other official (the titles of Ikhernofret are described in his stela from Abydos) during the reign of Senwosret III (Pharaoh Sesostri, about 1875 BC). The Passion Plays were held in the last month of the inundation (the annual Nile flood, coinciding with Spring, and held at Abydos/Abdju which was the traditional place where the body of Osiris/Wesir drifted ashore after having been drowned in the Nile.^[1]

The part of the myth recounting the chopping up of the body into 14 pieces by Set is not recounted in this particular stela. Although it is attested to be a part of the rituals by a version of the Papyrus Jumilhac, in which it took Isis 12 days to reassemble the pieces, coinciding with the festival of ploughing.^[23] Some elements of the ceremony were held in the temple, while others involved public participation in a form of theatre. The Stela of I-Kher-Nefert recounts the programme of events of the public elements over the five days of the Festival:

- *The First Day, The Procession of Wepwawet*: A mock battle was enacted during which the enemies of Osiris are defeated. A procession was led by the god Wepwawet ("opener of the way").
- *The Second Day, The Great Procession of Osiris*: The body of Osiris was taken from his temple to his tomb. The boat he was transported in, the "Neshmet" bark, had to be defended against his enemies.
- *The Third Day, Osiris is Mourned and the Enemies of the Land are Destroyed*.
- *The Fourth Day, Night Vigil*: Prayers and recitations are made and funeral rites performed.
- *The Fifth Day, Osiris is Reborn*: Osiris is reborn at dawn and crowned with the crown of Ma'at. A statue of Osiris is brought to the temple.^[1]

Wheat and clay rituals



Rare sample of Egyptian terra cotta sculpture, could be Isis mourning Osiris, (raising her right arm over her head, a typical mourning sign).
Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Contrasting with the public "theatrical" ceremonies sourced from the I-Kher-Nefert stela (from the Middle Kingdom), more esoteric ceremonies were performed inside the temples by priests witnessed only by chosen initiates. Plutarch mentions that (for much later period) two days after the beginning of the festival "the priests bring forth a sacred chest containing a small golden coffer, into which they pour some potable water...and a great shout arises from the company for joy that Osiris is found (or resurrected). Then they knead some fertile soil with the water...and fashion therefrom a crescent-shaped figure, which they cloth and adorn, this indicating that they regard these gods as the substance of Earth and Water." (*Isis and Osiris*, 39). Yet his accounts were still obscure, for he also wrote, "I pass over the cutting of the wood" - opting not to describe it, since he considered it as a most sacred ritual (*Ibid.* 21).

In the Osirian temple at Denderah, an inscription (translated by Budge, Chapter XV, Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection) describes in detail

the making of wheat paste models of each dismembered piece of Osiris to be sent out to the town where each piece is discovered by Isis. At the temple of Mendes, figures of Osiris were made from wheat and paste placed in a trough on the day of the murder, then water was added for several days, until finally the mixture was kneaded into a mold of Osiris and taken to the temple to be buried (the sacred grain for these cakes were grown only in the temple fields). Molds were made from the wood of a red tree in the forms of the sixteen dismembered parts of Osiris, the cakes of 'divine' bread were made from each mold, placed in a silver chest and set near the head of the god with *the inward parts of Osiris* as described in the Book of the Dead (XVII).

On the first day of the Festival of Ploughing, where the goddess Isis appeared in her shrine where she was stripped naked, paste made from the grain were placed in her bed and moistened with water, representing the fecund earth. All of these sacred rituals were "climaxed by the eating of sacramental god, the eucharist by which the celebrants were transformed, in their persuasion, into replicas of their god-man" (Larson 20).

Judgment

The idea of divine justice being exercised after death for wrongdoing during life is first encountered during the Old Kingdom, in a 6th dynasty tomb containing fragments of what would be described later as the Negative Confessions.^[24]

With the rise of the cult of Osiris during the Middle Kingdom the "democratization of religion" offered to even his humblest followers the prospect of eternal life, with moral fitness becoming the dominant factor in determining a person's suitability.

At death a person faced judgment by a tribunal of forty-two divine judges. If they led a life in conformance with the precepts of the goddess Ma'at, who represented truth and right living, the person was welcomed into the kingdom of Osiris. If found guilty, the person was thrown to a "devourer" and didn't share in eternal life.^[25]

The person who is taken by the devourer is subject first to terrifying punishment and then annihilated. These depictions of punishment may have influenced medieval perceptions of the inferno in hell via early Christian and Coptic texts.^[26]

Purification for those who are considered justified may be found in the descriptions of "Flame Island", where they experience the triumph over evil and rebirth. For the damned, complete destruction into a state of non-being awaits, but there is no suggestion of eternal torture.^{[27][28]}

Divine pardon at judgement was always a central concern for the Ancient Egyptians.^[29]

During the reign of Seti I, Osiris was also invoked in royal decrees to pursue the living when wrongdoing was observed, but kept secret and not reported.^[30]



Judgment scene from the Book of the Dead. In the three scenes from the Book of the Dead (version from ~1375 BC) the dead man (Hunefer) is taken into the judgement hall by the jackal-headed Anubis. The next scene is the weighing of his heart against the feather of Ma'at, with Ammut waiting the result, and Thoth recording. Next, the triumphant Henefer, having passed the test, is presented by the falcon-headed Horus to Osiris, seated in his shrine with Isis and Nephthys. (British Museum)

Greco-Roman era

Hellenisation

Eventually, in Egypt, the Hellenic pharaohs decided to produce a deity that would be acceptable to both the local Egyptian population, and the influx of Hellenic visitors, to bring the two groups together, rather than allow a source of rebellion to grow. Thus Osiris was identified explicitly with Apis, really an aspect of Ptah, who had already been identified as Osiris by this point, and a syncretism of the two was created, known as **Serapis**, and depicted as a standard Greek god.



Bust of Serapis.

Destruction of cult



Philae Island.

The cult of Osiris continued until the 6th century AD on the island of Philae in Upper Nile. The Theodosian decrees of the 390s, to destroy all pagan temples, were not enforced there. The worship of Isis and Osiris was allowed to continue at Philae until the time of Justinian, by treaty between the Blemmyes-Nobadae and Diocletian. Every year they visited Elephantine, and at certain intervals took the image of Isis up river to the land of the Blemmyes for oracular purposes. The practices ended when Justinian I sent Narses to destroy sanctuaries, arrest priests, and seize divine images, which were taken to

Constantinople.^[31]

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External links

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Pakhet

Pakhet
in hieroglyphs

In Egyptian mythology, **Pakhet**, Egyptian *Ph.t*, meaning *she who scratches* (also spelt **Pachet**, **Pehkhet**, **Phastet**, and **Pasht**) is a lioness goddess of war.

Origin and mythology

Pakhet is likely to be a regional lioness deity, *Goddess of the Mouth of the Wadi*, related to those that hunted in the wadi, near water at the boundary of the desert. Another title is *She Who Opens the Ways of the Stormy Rains*, which probably relates to the flash floods in the narrow valley, that occur from storms in the area. She appeared in the Egyptian pantheon during the Middle Kingdom. As with Bastet and Sekhmet, Pakhet is associated with Hathor and, thereby, is a sun deity as well, wearing the solar disk as part of her crown.

It became said that rather than a simple domestic protector against vermin and venomous creatures or a fierce warrior, she was a huntress, perhaps as a caracal, who wandered the desert alone at night looking for prey, gaining the title *Night huntress with sharp eye and pointed claw*. This desert aspect led to her being associated with desert storms, as was Sekhmet. She also was said to be a protector of motherhood, as was Bastet.

In art, she was depicted as a feline-headed woman or as a feline, often depicted killing snakes with her sharp claws. The exact nature of the feline varied between a desert wildcat, which was more similar to Bastet, or a caracal, resembling Sekhmet.



Hatshepsut and Pakhet. Speos Artemidos.

Temples near al Minya

The most famous temple of Pakhet was an underground, cavernous shrine that was built by Hatshepsut near al Minya,^[1] among thirty-nine ancient tombs of Middle Kingdom monarchs of the Oryx nome, who governed from Hebenu, in an area where many quarries exist. This is in the middle of Egypt, on the east bank of the Nile. A tomb on the east bank is not traditional (the west was), but the terrain to the west was most difficult. A more ancient temple to this goddess at the location is known but has not survived. Hatshepsut is known to have restored temples in this region that had been damaged by the Hyksos invaders.



The rock cut temple of Pakhet by Hatshepsut in Speos Artemidos.

Its remarkable catacombs have been excavated. Great numbers of mummified cats have been found buried there. Many are thought to have been brought great distances to be buried ceremonially during rituals at the cult center. Some references associate this goddess as Pakhet-Weret-Hekau, (Weret Hekau meaning *she who has great magic*), implying the association with a goddess such as Hathor or Isis. Another title is *Horus Pakht*; the presence of many mummified hawks at the site would further the association with Hathor who was the mother of Horus, the hawk, the pharaoh, and the sun.^[2]

Her hunting nature led to the Greeks, who later occupied Egypt for three hundred years, identifying Pakhet with Artemis. Consequently, this underground temple became known to them as *Speos Artemidos*, the *Cave of Artemis*, a name that persists even though Artemis is not an Egyptian goddess. The Greeks attempted to align the Egyptian deities with their own, while retaining the traditions of the Egyptian religion. Later, Egypt was conquered by the Romans, just after 30 AD, and they retained many of the Greek place names. Christians and other religious sects occupied some parts of the site during the Roman period. Arabic place names were established after the 600s.

Hatshepsut and her daughter Neferure have been identified as the builders of a smaller temple dedicated to Pakhet nearby, which was defaced by subsequent pharaohs. It was completed during the reign of Alexander II and is now called *Speos Batn el-Bakarah*.^[3]

Coffin text incantation

The Faulkner translation of Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts, Spell 470 reads,

O You of the dawn who wake and sleep,
O You who are in limpness, dwelling aforetime in Nedit,
I have appeared as Pakhet the Great,
whose eyes are keen and whose claws are sharp,
the lioness who sees and catches by night....^[4]

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External links

- *Per-Bast.org*: About Pasht... (<http://per-bast.org/bast/essay14.html>)

Petbe

In Egyptian mythology, **Petbe** was the god of revenge, worshiped in the area around Akhmin, in central Egypt. His name translates as *Sky-Ba*, roughly meaning *Soul of the Sky*, or *Mood of the sky*. However, Petbe may be a Chaldean deity introduced by immigrant workers from the Levant, with his name being a corruption of the hybrid phrase *Pet-(Ba'al)*, meaning *Lord of the sky*. Early Christians compared Petbe to the Greek god Cronus.

Petsuchos

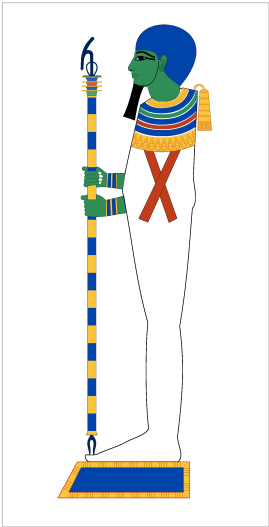
Petsuchos (Greek: Πετεσοῦχος) was (the Greek rendition of) the name given to the live crocodile at Crocodilopolis in Ancient Egypt, which was worshipped as a manifestation of the Egyptian god Sobek (Greek: Σοῦχος). The name Petsuchos means "son of Sobek", as the Ancient Egyptian word "pet" has a meaning of "son" or "offspring". Petsuchoi were worshiped as gods, and were adorned with jewels and gold. When the Petsuchos died, it was replaced by another. Their carcasses were mummified, like those of pharaohs and high priests.

In popular culture

In the PC game *Age of Mythology*, they appear as units which attack with solar heat rays that are reflected from a mirror on their crowns.

Ptah

Ptah



Ptah, in the form of a mummified man, standing on the symbol for Ma'at, holding a scepter or staff that bears the combined ankh-djed-was symbols.

God of creation, the arts and fertility	
Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Memphis
Symbol	the djed pillar, the bull
Consort	Bastet / Sekhmet
Parents	none (self-created)

In Egyptian mythology, **Ptah** (/pəˈtɑː/^[1] Egyptian: *ptḥ*, probably vocalized as *Pitah* in ancient Egyptian ^[2]) is the demiurge of Memphis, god of craftsmen and architects. In the triad of Memphis, he is the husband of Sekhmet and the father of Nefertum. He was also regarded as the father of the sage Imhotep. The Greeks knew him as the god Hephaestus, and in this form Manetho made him the first king of Egypt.

Origin and Symbolism

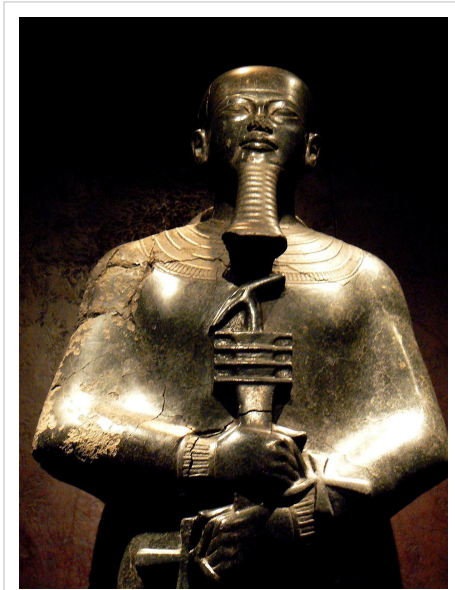
Ptah is the patron of craftsmanship, metalworking, carpenters, shipbuilders, and sculpture. From the Middle Kingdom onwards, he was one of five major Egyptian gods with Ra, Isis, Osiris and Amun.

He wears many epithets that describe his role in Egyptian mythology and its importance in society at the time:

- *Ptah the beautiful face*
- *Ptah lord of truth*
- *Ptah master of justice*
- *Ptah who listens to prayers*
- *Ptah master of ceremonies*
- *Ptah lord of eternity*

Ptah is the creator god par excellence: He is considered the demiurge who existed before all things, and by his willingness, *thought* the world. It was first conceived by Thought, and realized by the Word: *Ptah conceives the world by the thought of his heart and gives life through the magic of his Word*. That which Ptah commanded was created, with which the constituents of nature, fauna, and flora, are contained. He also plays a role in the preservation of the world and the permanence of the royal function.

In the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty, the Nubian pharaoh Shabaka would transcribe on a stela known as the Shabaka Stone, an old theological document found in the archives of the library of the temple of the god at Memphis. This document has been known as the Memphite Theology, and shows the god Ptah, the god responsible for the creation of the universe by thought and by the Word.



Statue of Ptah - Egyptian Museum of Turin.

Representations and hypostases

Like many deities of ancient Egypt he takes many forms, through one of his particular aspects or through syncretism of ancient deities of the Memphite region. He is sometimes represented as a dwarf, naked and deformed, whose popularity would continue to grow during the Late Period. Frequently associated with the god Bes, his worship then exceeded the borders of the country and was exported throughout the eastern Mediterranean. Thanks to the Phoenicians, we find figures of Ptah in Carthage.

Ptah is generally represented in the guise of a man with green skin, contained in a shroud sticking to the skin, wearing the divine beard, and holding a sceptre combining three powerful symbols of Egyptian mythology:

- The *Was* sceptre
- The sign of life, *Ankh*
- The *Djed* pillar

These three combined symbols indicate the three creative powers of the god: power (was), life (ankh) and stability (djed).



Stucco relief of Ptah with staff and ankh and djed.
Late Period or Ptolemaic Dynasty, 4th to 3rd
century BC.

From the Old Kingdom, he quickly absorbs the appearance of Sokar and Tatenen, ancient deities of the Memphite region. His form of Sokar is found contained in its white shroud wearing the Atef crown, an attribute of Osiris. In this capacity, he represents the god of the necropolis of Saqqara and other famous sites where the royal pyramids were built. Gradually he formed with Osiris a new deity called Ptah-Sokar-Osiris. Statuettes representing the human form, half-human, half-hawk, or simply in its falcon form will be systematically placed in tombs to accompany and protect the dead on their journey to the West.

His Tatenen form is represented by a young and vigorous man wearing a crown with two tall plumes that surround the solar disk. He thus embodies the underground fire that rumbles and raises the earth. As such, he was particularly revered by metalworkers and blacksmiths, but he was equally feared because it was him who caused earthquakes and tremors of the earth's crust. In this form also, Ptah is the *master of ceremonies* for Heb Sed, a ceremony traditionally attesting to the first thirty years of the Pharaoh's reign.

The god Ptah could be opposite the sun god Re, or Aten during the Amarna period, where he embodied the divine essence with which the sun god was fed to come into existence, that is to say to be born, according to the Memphite mythological texts. In the *holy of holies* of his temple in Memphis, as well as in his great sacred boat, he drove in procession to regularly visit the region during major holidays. Ptah was also symbolized by two birds with human heads adorned with solar disks, symbols of the souls of the god Re: the Ba. The two Ba are also identified as the twin gods Shu and Tefnut and are associated with the djed pillar of Memphis.^[3]

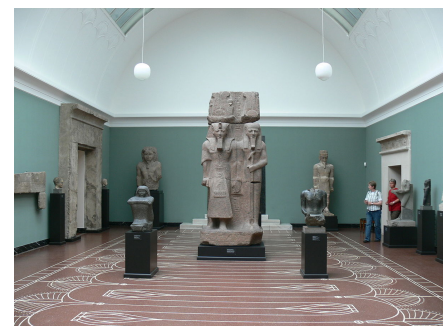
Finally, Ptah is embodied in the sacred bull, Apis. Frequently referred to as a *herald of Re*, the sacred animal is the link with the god Re from the New Kingdom. He even received worship in Memphis, probably at the heart of the great temple of Ptah, and its death was buried with all the honours due to a living god in the Serapeum of Saqqara.

Ptah was assimilated by the Greeks to the god Hephaistos and then by the Romans to Vulcan.

Development of the Cult

As god of craftsmen, the cult of the god Ptah quickly spread throughout Egypt. With the major royal projects of the Old Kingdom, the High Priests of Ptah were particularly sought after and worked in concert with the Vizier, somehow filling the role of chief architect and master craftsmen, responsible for the decoration of the royal funerary complexes.

In the New Kingdom, the cult of the god would develop in different ways, especially in Memphis, his homeland, but also in Thebes, where the workers of the royal tomb honoured him for his quality as patron of craftsmen. It is for this reason that the oratory of *Ptah who listens to prayers* was built near the site of Deir el-Medina, the village where the workers and craftsmen were confined. At Memphis, the role of



Colossal statue of the god Ptah-Tatenen holding hands with Ramses II found at Memphis - Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen

intercessor with men was particularly visible in the appearance of the enclosure that protected the sanctuary of the god. Large ears were carved on the walls and symbolized his role as *god who listens to men*.

With the Nineteenth Dynasty, his cult grew and he became one of the four great gods of the empire of Ramses. He was worshipped at Pi-Ramesses as master of ceremonies and coronations.

With the Third Intermediate Period, Ptah returned to the centre of the monarchy where the coronation of the Pharaoh was held again in his temple. The Ptolemies continued this tradition and the high priests of Ptah were then increasingly associated with the royal family. Some of whom even married princesses of blood, clearly indicating the prominent role they played in the Ptolemaic court.

Main places of worship

Temple dedicated to	Location
Ptah	Pi-Ramesses
Ptah	Memphis
Ptah who listens to prayers	Memphis
Ptah whos is south of his Wall	Memphis
Ptah-Sokar	Abydos
Ptah-Sokar	Kom el-Hettan (Thebes)
Ptah who listens to prayers	Deir el-Medina (Thebes)
Ptah	Karnak (Thebes)
Ptah	Gerf Hussein (Nubia)
Ptah lord of truth	Abu Simbel (Nubia)

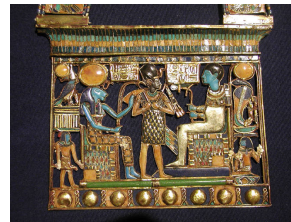
Photos



Profile of the god Ptah - Relief of the small temple of Hathor at Memphis



Colossal triad representing Ptah-Ramses II-Sekhmet – Gardens of the Egyptian Museum of Cairo



Pectoral of Tutankhamun representing the young king between the goddess Sekhmet and Ptah – Egyptian Museum of Cairo



Statuette of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris – The Louvre



Votive stele dedicated to the god Ptah in the temple of Deir el-Medina. New Kingdom, XX Dynasty, c. 1150 B.C.

Legacy

The English name *Egypt* derives from an ancient Egyptian name for Memphis, *Hikuptah*, which means "Home of the Soul of Ptah". This entered Ancient Greek as *Αἴγυπτος* (*Aiguptos*), which entered Latin as *Ægyptus*, which developed into English as *Egypt*.

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- [3] Cf. J. Berlandini, *Contribution à l'étude du pilier-djed memphite*, p.23-33 et pl. 1 A & pl. 2 A
- [4] http://books.google.ca/books?id=SyO6bc4GNuAC&printsec=frontcover&dq=ptah+egypt&source=bl&ots=kkPXWD_Oa4&sig=wukBnnyL1F6aBfdukk0kMNK4dfl&hl=en&sa=X&ei=6xM5UO7hM-n6iwL61oD4AQ&ved=0CEQQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=ptah%20egypt&f=false
- [5] <http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/archiv/7030>

Qebehsenuuf



Canopic jar Depicting *Qebehsenuuf*

**Qebehsenuuf
in hieroglyphs**

Qebehsenuuf (His name is variously transliterated as *Kebehsennuf*, *Kebechsenef*, *Qebshenuf*, *Qebehsenuf* or *Kabexnuf*, meaning 'He who refreshes his brothers') was one of the sons of Horus in Egyptian mythology, the god of protection and of the West.^[1] In the preparation of mummies, his canopic jar was used for the intestines. He is seen as a mummy with a falcon head. He was said to be protected by the goddess Serket.

[Qebhsennuf saith:] "I am thy son, O Osiris Ani, triumphant. I have come to protect thee. I have collected thy bones, and I have gathered together thy members. I have brought thy heart and I have placed it upon its throne within thy body. I have made thy house to flourish after thee, O thou who livest for ever."^[2]

Together with Maa-atef-f, Kheri-beq-f, and Horus-Khenti-maa, the four sons of Horus (the other three were Imset, Hapi and Duamutef) were known as the Seven Shining Ones, protectors of the body of Osiris.

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Qebui

Qebui is the Egyptian god of the North Wind. He is a male and in art, Qebui appears as a man with four ram heads, or a winged, four-headed ram. He is also associated with the lands beyond the third cataract.

Qetesh

QeteshWikipedia:Manual_of_Style/Pronunciation is a goddess adopted into Egyptian mythology from the Canaanite religion, popular during the New Kingdom. She was a fertility goddess of sacred ecstasy and sexual pleasure.^[1]

The name was probably vocalized by Egyptians as ***Qātiša** from the Semitic root *Q-D-Š* meaning 'holy'. Her city of worship was naturally Qadesh.



Qetesh on the Triple Goddess Stone.

Representation

In the Qetesh stele, she is represented as a frontal nude standing on a lion between Min of Egypt and the Canaanite warrior god Resheph. She is holding snakes in one hand and a lotus flower in the other as symbols of creation.

She is associated with Anat, Astarte, and Asherah. She also has elements associated with the goddesses of Mycenaean, the Minoans of Crete, and certain Kassite goddesses of the metals trade in Tin, Copper and Bronze between Lothal and Dilmun.

On some versions of the Qetesh stele her register with Min and Resheph is placed over another register showing gifts being presented to Anat the goddess of War and below a register listing the lands belonging to Min and Resheph.

Qudshu-Astarte-Anat is a representation of a single goddess who is a combination of three goddesses:

Qetesh (Athirat "Asherah"), Astarte, and Anat. It was a common practice for Canaanites and Egyptians to merge different deities through a process of synchronization, thereby, turning them into one single entity. The "Triple-Goddess Stone", that was once owned by Winchester College, shows the goddess Qetesh with the inscription "Qudshu-Astarte-Anat", showing their association as being one goddess, and Qetesh (Qudshu) in place of Athirat. Religious scholar Saul M. Olyan (author of *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel*), calls the representation on the Qudshu-Astarte-Anat plaque "a triple-fusion hypostasis", and considers Qudshu to be an epithet of Athirat by a process of elimination, for Astarte and Anat appear after Qudshu in the inscription.^{[2][3]}



Qetesh wearing the headdress of Hathor.

Epithets

She is called "Mistress of All the Gods", "Lady of the Stars of Heaven", "Beloved of Ptah", "Great of magic, mistress of the stars", and "Eye of Ra, without her equal".^[4] Qadshu is also used as an epithet of Athirat, the Great Mother Goddess of the Canaanites.^[5]

In popular culture

Qetesh is the name given to the Goa'uld that once possessed Vala Mal Doran, a recurring and then regular character in Seasons 9 and 10, respectively of the science fiction television series *Stargate SG-1*.

References

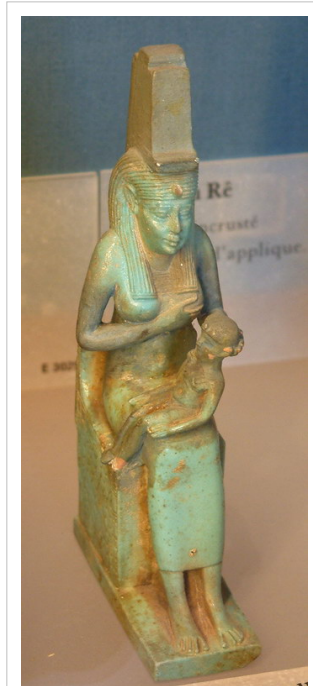
- [1] The American journal of urology and sexology (http://books.google.com/books?id=VD1YAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA71&lpg=PA71&dq=Kadesh+city+Qetesh&source=bl&ots=ABxEeP9HPV&sig=6SM95eUz2QAt2BvpD2xhfrfBaSm8&hl=en&ei=gE_eTpn0JY22tweKs9j3Ag&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCMQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Kadesh+city+Qetesh&f=false)
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External links

- Johanna Stuckey, The "Holy One" (<http://www.matrifocus.com/LAM07/spotlight.htm>), MatriFocus, 2007

Queen of heaven (antiquity)

Queen of Heaven was a title given to a number of ancient sky goddesses in the ancient Mediterranean and Near East, in particular Anat, Isis, Innana, Astarte, Hera and possibly Asherah (by the prophet Jeremiah). Elsewhere, Nordic Frigg also bore this title. In Greco-Roman times Hera, and her Roman aspect Juno bore this title. Forms and content of worship varied. The title Queen of Heaven is used by Catholics and Orthodox Christians for Mary.



A statue of Isis nursing her son,
housed in the Louvre

Isis



Apuleius wrote about the Queen of Heaven referring to Queen Isis

Isis was venerated first in Egypt. As per the Greek historian Herodotus, writing in the fifth century BCE, Isis was the only goddess worshiped by all Egyptians alike,^[1] and whose influence was so widespread by that point, that she had become completely syncretic with the Greek goddess Demeter.^[2] It is after the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great, and the Hellenization of the Egyptian culture initiated by Ptolemy I Soter, that she eventually became known as 'Queen of Heaven'.^[3] Lucius Apuleius confirmed this in Book 11, Chap 47 of his novel known as *The Golden Ass*, in which his character prayed to the "Queen of Heaven". The passage says that the goddess herself responded to his prayer, in which she explicitly identified herself as both the Queen of Heaven and Isis.

Then with a weeping countenance, I made this orison to the puissant Goddess, saying: O blessed Queen of Heaven...

Thus the divine shape breathing out the pleasant spice of fertile Arabia, disdained not with her divine voice to utter these words unto me: Behold Lucius I am come, thy weeping and prayers has moved me to succor thee. I am she that is the natural mother of all things, mistress and governess of all the elements, the initial progeny of worlds, chief of powers divine, Queen of Heaven... and the Egyptians which are excellent in all kind of ancient doctrine, and by their proper ceremonies accustomed to worship me, do call me Queen Isis.^[4]

Inanna

Inanna was the Sumerian Goddess of love and war. Despite her association with mating and fertility of humans and animals, Inanna was not a mother goddess, and is rarely associated with childbirth.^[5] Inanna was also associated with rain and storms and with the planet Venus.^[6]

Queen of Heaven is a title used for goddesses central to many religions of antiquity. Inanna's name is commonly derived from *Nin-anna* "Queen of Heaven" (from Sumerian NIN "lady", AN "sky"),^[7] although the cuneiform sign for her name (Borger 2003 nr. 153, U+12239 𒀭𒊩) is not historically a ligature of the two. In some traditions Inanna was said to be a granddaughter of the creator goddess Nammu or Namma.^[citation needed] These difficulties have led some early Assyriologists to suggest that Inanna may have been originally a Proto-Euphratean goddess, possibly related to the Hurrian mother goddess Hannahannah, accepted only latterly into the Sumerian pantheon, an idea supported by her youthfulness, and that, unlike the other Sumerian divinities, she at first had no sphere of responsibilities.^[8] The view that there was a Proto-Euphratean substrate language in Southern Iraq before Sumerian is not widely accepted by modern Assyriologists.^[9] In Sumer **Inanna** was hailed as "Queen of Heaven" in the 3rd millennium BC. In Akkad to the north, she was worshipped later as **Ishtar**. In the Sumerian *Descent of Inanna*, when Inanna is challenged at the outermost gates of the underworld, she replies

I am Inanna, Queen of Heaven,
On my way to the East.

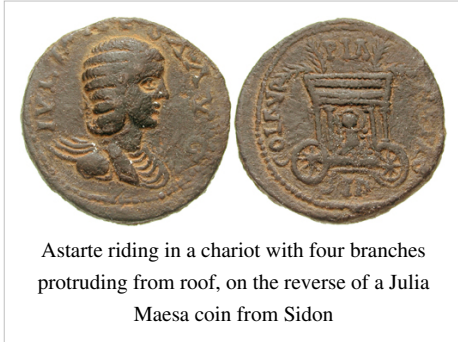
Her cult was deeply embedded in Mesopotamia and among the Canaanites to the west.



The Ishtar Gate refers to Ishtar previously known as Innana

Astarte

The goddess, the Queen of Heaven, whose worship Jeremiah so vehemently opposed, may have been possibly Astarte. Astarte is the name of a goddess as known from Northwestern Semitic regions, cognate in name, origin and functions with the goddess Ishtar in Mesopotamian texts. Another transliteration is *'Ashtart*; other names for the goddess include Hebrew עַשְׁתָּרֶת (transliterated *Ashtoreth*), Ugaritic *'ttrt* (also *'Attart* or *'Athtart*, transliterated *Atirat*), Akkadian ^D*As-tar-tú* (also *Astartu*) and Etruscan *Uni-Astre* (Pyrgi Tablets).



Astarte riding in a chariot with four branches protruding from roof, on the reverse of a Julia Maesa coin from Sidon

According to scholar Mark S. Smith, Astarte may be the Iron Age (after 1200 BC) incarnation of the Bronze Age (to 1200 BC) Asherah.^[10]

Astarte was connected with fertility, sexuality, and war. Her symbols were the lion, the horse, the sphinx, the dove, and a star within a circle indicating the planet Venus. Pictorial representations often show her naked. Astarte was accepted by the Greeks under the name of Aphrodite. The island of Cyprus, one of Astarte's greatest faith centers, supplied the name Cypris as Aphrodite's most common byname.

Asherah was worshipped in ancient Israel as the consort of El and in Judah as the consort of Yahweh and Queen of Heaven (the Hebrews baked small cakes for her festival):^[11]

"Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger."^[12]

"... to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem ..."^[13]

Hebrew Bible references

Worship of a "Queen of Heaven", in Hebrew Malkath haShamayim (מַלְכַּת הַשָּׁמַיִם) is recorded in the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, circa 628 BC, in the context of the Prophet condemning such religious worship as blasphemy and a violation of the teachings of the God of Israel. In Jeremiah 7:18:

"The children gather wood, the fathers light the fire, and the women knead the dough and make cakes of bread for the Queen of Heaven. They pour out drink offerings to other gods to provoke me to anger."^[14]

In Jeremiah 44:15-18:

"Then all the men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other gods, along with all the women who were present—a large assembly—and all the people living in Lower and Upper Egypt, said to Jeremiah, "We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD! We will certainly do everything we said we would: We will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and will pour out drink offerings to her just as we and our fathers, our kings and our officials did in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. At that time we had plenty of food and were well off and suffered no harm. But ever since we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have had nothing and have been perishing by sword and famine." "^[15]

It should be remembered in this context that there was a temple of Yahweh in Egypt at that time that was central to the Jewish community at Elephantine in which Yahweh was worshipped in conjunction with the goddess Anath (also named in the temple papyri as Anath-Bethel and Anath-Iahu).^[16]

The goddesses Asherah, Anath and Astarte first appear as distinct and separate deities in the tablets discovered in the ruins of the library of Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra, Syria), although some Biblical scholars who have not explored the earlier documented evidence tend to jumble all these goddesses together.

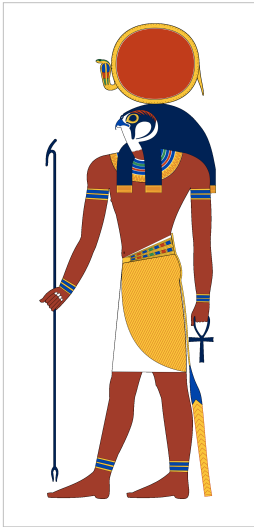
John Day states that "there is nothing in first-millennium BC texts that singles out Asherah as 'Queen of Heaven' or associates her particularly with the heavens at all."^[17]

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- [11] William G. Dever, "Did God Have a Wife?" (Eerdmans, ISBN 0-8028-2852-3, 2005) - see reviews of this book by Patrick D. Miller (http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/4910_6305.pdf), Yairah Amit (http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/4910_5127.pdf).
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- [13] Jeremiah 44:17
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Ra

Ra / Re



In one of his many forms, Ra has the head of a falcon and the sun-disk resting on his head.

God of the Sun	
Name in hieroglyphs	or or
Major cult center	Heliopolis
Symbol	The sun disc
Consort	None (sometimes referred as Hathor)
Parents	Ocean Nun
Siblings	Apep
Offspring	Shu, Tefnut, Bastet, some say Sekhmet

Ra /rɑː/^[1] or **Re** /reɪ/ (Egyptian: 𐀀𐀢, r^ʕ) was the ancient Egyptian solar deity. By the Fifth Dynasty (2494 to 2345 BC) he had become a major god in ancient Egyptian religion, identified primarily with the midday sun. The meaning of the name is uncertain, but it is thought that if not a word for 'sun' it may be a variant of or linked to words meaning 'creative power' and 'creator'.^[2]

The major cult centre of Ra was Heliopolis (called *Iunu*, "Place of Pillars", in Egyptian),^[3] where he was identified with the local sun-god Atum. Through Atum, or as Atum-Ra, he was also seen as the first being and the originator of the Ennead, consisting of Shu and Tefnut, Geb and Nut, Osiris, Set, Isis and Nephthys.

In later Egyptian dynastic times, Ra was merged with the god Horus, as Re-Horakhty ("Ra, who is Horus of the Two Horizons"). He was believed to rule in all parts of the created world the sky, the earth, and the underworld.^[3] He was associated with the falcon or hawk. When in the New Kingdom the god Amun rose to prominence he was fused with Ra as Amun-Ra. During the Amarna Period, Akhenaten suppressed the cult of Ra in favour of another solar deity, the Aten, the deified solar disc, but after the death of Akhenaten the cult of Ra was restored.

The cult of the Mnevis bull, an embodiment of Ra, had its centre in Heliopolis and there was a formal burial ground for the sacrificed bulls north of the city.

All forms of life were believed to have been created by Ra, who called each of them into existence by speaking their secret names. Alternatively humans were created from Ra's tears and sweat, hence the Egyptians call themselves the "Cattle of Ra." In the myth of the Celestial Cow it is recounted how mankind plotted against Ra and how he sent his eye as the goddess Sekhmet to punish them. When she became bloodthirsty she was pacified by mixing beer with red dye.

Role

Ra and the sun

To the Egyptians, the sun represented light, warmth, and growth. This made the sun deity very important, as the sun was seen as the ruler of all that he created. The sun disk was either seen as the body or eye of Ra. Ra was the father of Shu and Tefnut, whom he created. Shu was the god of the wind, and Tefnut was the goddess of the rain. Sekhmet was the Eye of Ra and was created by the fire in Ra's eye. She was a violent lioness.

Ra in the underworld

Ra was thought to travel on two solar boats called the *Mandjet* (the Boat of Millions of Years), or morning boat and the *Mesektet*, or evening boat.^[1] These boats took him on his journey through the sky and the *Duat*, the literal underworld of Egypt. While Ra was on the *Mesektet*, he was in his ram-headed form.^[1] When Ra traveled in his sun boat he was accompanied by various other deities including Sia (perception) and Hu (command) as well as Heka (magic power). Sometimes members of the Ennead helped him on his journey, including Set who overcame the serpent Apophis and Mehen who defended against the monsters of the underworld. When Ra was in the underworld, he would visit all of his various forms.^[1]

Apophis, the God of chaos, was an enormous serpent who attempted to stop the sun boat's journey every night by consuming it or by stopping it in its tracks with a hypnotic stare. During the evening, the Egyptians believed that Ra set as Atum or in the form of a ram. The *Mesektet*, or the Night boat, would carry him through the underworld and back towards the east in preparation for his rebirth. These myths of Ra represented the sun rising as the rebirth of the sun by the sky goddess Nut; thus attributing the concept of rebirth and renewal to Ra and strengthening his role as a creator god as well. When Ra was in the underworld, he merged with Osiris, the God of the dead, and through it became the god of the dead as well.^[1]

Ra as creator

With the Ancient Egyptian's complicated polytheistic beliefs, Ra was worshipped as the creator god to some Ancient Egyptians, specifically his followers at Heliopolis.^[1] It was believed that Ra wept, and from the tears he wept came man.^[1] These cult-followers believed that Ra was self-created, while followers of Ptah believed that Ra was created by Ptah.^[1] It is believed that this is the reason for pyramids of Old Kingdom worshippers at Heliopolis rarely mentioning Ra.^[1] In a passage of the Book of the Dead, Ra cuts himself, and his blood transforms into two intellectual personifications: *Hu*, or authority, and *Sia*, or mind.^[1] Ra is also accredited with the creation of the seasons, months, plants, and animals.^[4]

Iconography

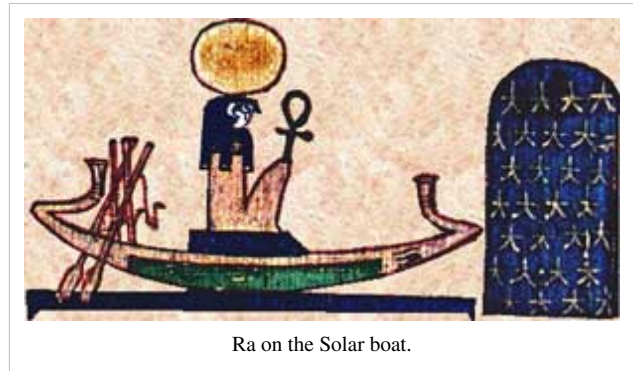
Ra was represented in a variety of forms. The most usual form was a man with the head of a hawk and a solar disk on top and a coiled serpent around the disk.^[1] Other common forms are a man with the head of a beetle (in his form as Khepri), or a man with the head of a ram. Ra was also pictured as a full-bodied ram, beetle, phoenix, heron, serpent, bull, cat, or lion, among others.^[5]

He was most commonly featured with a ram's head in the Underworld.^[1] In this form, Ra is described as being the "ram of the west" or "ram in charge of his harem."^[1]

In some literature, Ra is described as an aging king with golden flesh, silver bones, and hair of lapis lazuli.^[1]

Worship

The chief cult centre of Ra was Heliopolis (called *Iunu*, "Place of Pillars", in Egyptian),^[3] where he was identified with the local sun-god Atum. Through Atum, or as Atum-Ra he was also seen as the first being and the originator of the Ennead, consisting of Shu and Tefnut, Geb and Nut, Osiris, Set, Isis and Nephthys. Oddly enough, this was the home of the Ennead that was believed to be headed by Atum, with whom he was merged. The holiday of 'The Receiving of Ra' was celebrated on May 26 in the Gregorian calendar.



Ra on the Solar boat.

His local cult began to grow from roughly the second dynasty, establishing Ra as a sun deity. By the fourth dynasty the pharaohs were seen as Ra's manifestations on earth, referred to as "Sons of Ra". His worship increased massively in the fifth dynasty, when Ra became a state deity and pharaohs had specially aligned pyramids, obelisks, and solar temples built in his honor. The rulers of the fifth dynasty told their followers that they were sons of Ra himself and the wife of the high priest of Heliopolis.^[1] These pharaohs spent most of Egypt's money on sun temples.^[1] The first Pyramid Texts began to arise, giving Ra more and more significance in the journey of the pharaoh through the Underworld.^[1]

During the Middle Kingdom era, Ra was increasingly affiliated and combined with other chief deities, especially Amun and Osiris.

At the time of the New Kingdom, the worship of Ra had become more complicated and grander. The walls of tombs were dedicated to extremely detailed texts that depicted Ra's journey through the underworld. Ra was said to carry the prayers and blessings of the living with the souls of the dead on the sun boat. The idea that Ra aged with the sun became more popular during the rise of the New Kingdom.

Many acts of worship included hymns, prayers, and spells to help Ra and the sun boat overcome Apep.

The rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire put an end to the worship of Ra by the citizens of Egypt,^[6] and as Ra's popularity suddenly died out, the study of Ra became of purely academic interest even among the Egyptian priests.^[7]

Relationship to other gods

Gods merged with Ra

As with most widely worshiped Egyptian deities, Ra's identity was often combined with other gods, forming an interconnection between deities.

Amun and Amun-Ra

Amun was a member of the Ogdoad, representing creation energies with Amaunet, a very early patron of Thebes. He was believed to create via breath, and thus was identified with the wind rather than the sun. As the cults of Amun and Ra became increasingly popular in Upper and Lower Egypt respectively they were combined to create Amun-Ra, a solar creator god. It is hard to distinguish exactly when this combination happened, but references to Amun-Ra appeared in pyramid texts as early as the fifth dynasty. The most common belief is that Amun-Ra was invented as a new state deity by the Theban rulers of the New Kingdom to unite worshipers of Amun with the older cult of Ra around the 18th dynasty.^[1] Amun-Ra was given the official title "king of the gods" by worshippers, and images show the combined deity as a red-eyed man with a lion's head that had a surrounding solar disk.^[2]



Ra and Amun, from the tomb of Ramses IV.

Atum and Atum-Ra

Atum-Ra (or Ra-Atum) was another composite deity formed from two completely separate deities, however Ra shared more similarities with Atum than with Amun. Atum was more closely linked with the sun, and was also a creator god of the Ennead. Both Ra and Atum were regarded as the father of the deities and pharaohs, and were widely worshiped. In older myths, Atum was the creator of Tefnut and Shu, and he was born from ocean Nun.

Ra-Horakhty

In later Egyptian mythology, Ra-Horakhty was more of a title or manifestation than a composite deity. It translates as "Ra (who is) Horus of the Horizons". It was intended to link Horakhty (as a sunrise-oriented aspect of Horus) to Ra. It has been suggested that Ra-Horakhty simply refers to the sun's journey from horizon to horizon as Ra, or that it means to show Ra as a symbolic deity of hope and rebirth. (See earlier section: Ra and the sun).

Khepri and Khnum

Khepri was a scarab beetle who rolled up the sun in the mornings, and was sometimes seen as the morning manifestation of Ra. Similarly, the ram-headed god Khnum was also seen as the evening manifestation of Ra. The idea of different deities (or different aspects of Ra) ruling over different times of the day was fairly common, but variable. With Khepri and Khnum taking precedence over sunrise and sunset, Ra often was the representation of midday when the sun reached its peak at noon. Sometimes different aspects of Horus were used instead of Ra's aspects.



c. 1298-1235 BCE Imentet and Ra from the tomb of Nefertari.

Raet-Tawy

Raet or Raet-Tawy was a female aspect of Ra; she did not have much of importance independently of him. In some myths she was considered to be either Ra's wife or his daughter.^[8]

Gods created by Ra

Bastet

Bastet is sometimes known as the "cat of Ra".[□] She is also his daughter and is associated with Ra's instrument of vengeance, the sun-god's eye.[□] Bastet is known for decapitating the serpent Apophis (Ra's sworn enemy and the "God" of Chaos) to protect Ra.[□] In one myth, Ra sent Bastet as a lioness to Nubia.[□]

Sekhmet

Sekhmet is another daughter of Ra.[□] Sekhmet was depicted as a lioness or large cat, and was an "eye of Ra", or an instrument of the sun god's vengeance.[□] In one myth, Sekhmet was so filled with rage that Ra was forced to turn her into a cow so that she would not cause unnecessary harm.[□] In another myth, Ra fears that mankind is plotting against him and sends Hathor (another daughter of Ra) to exterminate the human race.[□] In the morning Sekhmet goes to finish the job and drinks what appears to be blood.[□] It turns out to be red beer, and she is too intoxicated to finish the slaughter.[□]

Hathor

Hathor is another daughter of Ra.[□] When Ra feared that mankind was plotting against him, he sent Hathor as an "eye of Ra" to exterminate the human race, later sending Sekhmet to finish the job.[□] In one myth, Hathor danced naked in front of Ra until he laughed to cure him of a fit of sulking.[□] When Ra was without Hathor, he fell into a state of deep depression.^[9]

Rival gods

Ptah

Ptah is rarely mentioned in the literature of Old Kingdom Pyramids.[□] This is believed by some to be a result of the Ra-worshipping people of Heliopolis being the main writers of these inscriptions.[□] Followers of Ra were known to be jealous of Ptah.[□] While some believed that Ra created himself, others believed that Ptah created him.^[10]

Isis

Isis frequently schemed against Ra, as she wanted her son Horus to have the power.[□] In one myth, Isis created a serpent to poison Ra and only gave him the antidote when he revealed his true name to her.[□] Ra now feared Isis, as with his secret name revealed she could use all her power against him and have Horus take over the throne.[□]

Apep

Apep also called Apophis, was the god of chaos and Ra's greatest enemy. He was said to lie just below the horizon line, trying to devour Ra as Ra descended into the underworld. As he swallowed Ra, this led to the setting of the sun and when he had completely swallowed Ra this led to nighttime. He never succeeded in completely swallowing Ra however as he eventually spit Ra back out, causing the sun to rise.

In popular culture

- Ra is the main villain of the 1994 film *Stargate*. In it, he is an alien that enslaves ancient Egyptians and brings them to a planet halfway across the universe using a device known as a Stargate.
- In *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark*, Indiana Jones must use the headpiece of the Staff of Ra to find the location of the Ark of the Covenant, which is hidden in Tanis.
- In *The Kane Chronicles* by Rick Riordan, Ra first appears in *The Throne of Fire* as a senile old man. In *The Serpent's Shadow*, he is reborn with his mind intact and willingly abdicates his throne so that Horus can take over.
- In the multiplayer online battle arena video game *Smite*, Ra is a playable god.
- In season four of the Syfy reality television series *Face Off*, the contestant Eric F. created a Ra mummy based on the *Evil Dead* franchise.
- In Yu-Gi-Oh!, Ra is an Egyptian God Card called "The Winged Dragon Of Ra" or "Sun Dragon Ra."

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Raet-Tawy

Raet / Raet-Tawy



A statue of Raet.

Female aspect of Ra

Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Medamud, el Tod, Thebes
Consort	Montu

Raet (*r^ḥ.t*) or **Raet-Tawy** (*r^ḥ.t-t3.wi*) is an ancient Egyptian solar goddess, the female aspect of Ra. Her name is simply the female form of Ra's name; the longer name *Raet-Tawy* means "Raet of the Two Lands" (Upper and Lower Egypt).

Origins

First appears during the reign of the Fifth Dynasty, Raet is likely to have been a companion of Ra from the start, and did not have a separate origin. Although she was called the lady of the sky and the gods, she never reached the importance of Hathor, who was also considered the wife of Ra (or, in other myths, his daughter).^[1]

Cult

Raet was also considered a wife of Montu,^[2] and she formed a triad with him and Harpocrates in Karnak and Medamud. Her feast day was in the fourth month of the reaping season.^[1] The centers of her cult were at Medamud, El-Tod, and Thebes. A demotic manual from the Roman period with hymns to Raet has survived in fragments.^[3]

Iconography

Images of Raet are rare. When she is depicted, she is shown as a woman with cow horns holding a sun disk on her head, similar to the headdress of Hathor. The headdress is adorned with a uraeus or with feathers.^[1]

References

[1] Richard Wilkinson: The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt. London, Thames and Hudson, 2003. ISBN 978-0500051207 p.164

[2] Wörterbuch, p.402

Rem (mythology)

Rem[ⓘ] in hieroglyphs
--

Rem ("to weep"), also **Rem-Rem**, **Remi**, or **Remi the Weeper**, who lives in Rem-Rem, the realm of weeping^[1] is a fish god in Egyptian mythology who fertilizes the land with his tears,^[2] producing both vegetation and the reptiles.^[3] He is assumed to be the personification of Ra's tears.[ⓘ]

References

Renenutet

Renenutet (also transliterated as **Ernutet**, and **Renenet**) was a goddess of nourishment and the harvest in ancient Egyptian religion.^[1] The importance of the harvest caused people to make many offerings to Renenutet during harvest time. Initially, her cult was centered in Terenuthis. Renenutet was envisioned, particularly in art, as a cobra, or as a woman with the head of a cobra.

Sometimes, as the goddess of nourishment, Renenutet was seen as having a husband, Sobek. He was represented as the Nile River, the annual flooding of which deposited the fertile silt that enabled abundant harvests. More usually, Renenutet was seen as the mother of Nehebkau, who occasionally was represented as a snake also. When considered the mother of Nehebkau, Renenutet was seen as having a husband, Geb, who represented the Earth.

Later, as a snake-goddess worshiped over the whole of Lower Egypt, Renenutet was increasingly associated with Wadjet, Lower Egypt's powerful protector and another snake goddess represented as a cobra. Eventually Renenutet was identified as an alternate form of Wadjet, whose gaze was said to slaughter enemies. Wadjet is the cobra on the crown of the pharaohs.

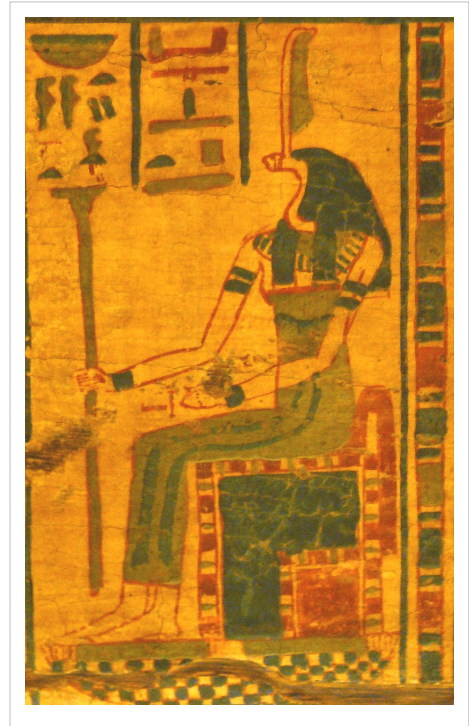


Star pattern; Nepret, Renenutet and Hu as cobras.

Hymn

The *Hymn of Renenutet* says:

*I will make the Nile swell for you,
without there being a year of lack and exhaustion in the whole
land,
so the plants will flourish, bending under their fruit.
The land of Egypt is beginning to stir again,
the shores are shining wonderfully,
and wealth and well-being dwell with them,
as it had been before.*



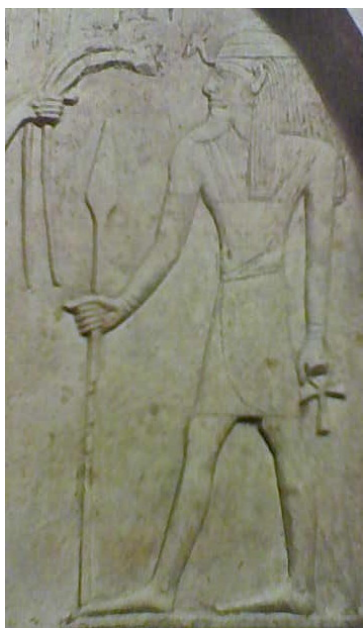
References

Repyt

Repyt was an ancient Egyptian goddess.^[1] She was normally portrayed as a lioness goddess of Egypt.

References

Resheph



Resheph with long hair

Ršp in hieroglyphs

Resheph (Rašap, Rešef, Reshef; Canaanite/Hebrew רֶשֶׁף רָשָׁפַּי) was a Canaanite deity of plague and war. In Egyptian iconography Resheph is depicted wearing the crown of Upper Egypt (White Crown), surmounted in front by the head of a gazelle. He has links with Theban war god Montu and was thought of as a guardian deity in battle by many Egyptian pharaohs. Although the iconography of Resheph shares the gazelle with that of the Egyptian-Canaanite Shed, Izak Cornelius writes that "the rest of the attributes are totally different." ^[1] According to myth, Resheph exerted a benign influence against disease.

In Ugaritic Texts

In Ugarit, Resheph was identified with Nergal, in Idalion, Cyprus, with Apollo.^[2]

Resheph is mentioned in Ugaritic mythological texts such as the epic of Kirta^[3] and The Mare and Horon.^[4]

In Phoenician inscriptions he is called *rsHP gn* 'Resheph of the Garden' and *b l chtz* 'lord of the arrow'. Phoenician-Hittite bilinguals^[citation needed] refer to him as 'deer god' and 'gazelle god'.

In Kition, Cyprus, Resheph had the epithet of *hš*, interpreted as "arrow" by Javier Teixidor,^[2] who consequently interprets Resheph as a god of plague, comparable to Apollo whose arrows bring plague to the Danaans (Iliad I.42-55).

Resheph became popular in Egypt under Amenhotep II (18th dynasty), where he served as god of horses and chariots. Originally adopted into the royal cult, Resheph became a popular deity in the Ramesside

Period, at the same time disappearing from royal inscriptions. In this later period, Resheph is often accompanied by Qetesh and Min.

The ancient town of Arsuf in central Israel still incorporates the name Resheph, thousands of years after his worship ceased.

In Eblaite Texts

Resheph is found in the third millennium tablets from Ebla (Tell Mardikh) as Rasap or Ra-sa-ap. He is listed as the divinity of the cities of Atanni, Gunu, Tunip, and Shechem. Rasap is also one of the chief gods of the city of Ebla having one of the four city gates named in his honor.^[5]

In Hebrew Bible

The Hebrew of Habakkuk 3:5 names Dabir and Resheph marching defeated before El's parade from Teman and Mount Paran. Dabir and Resheph are normally translated as Pestilence and Plague. Due to the literary discoveries at Tell Mardikh, for the first time Dabir is attested as a divinity outside the Hebrew Bible.^[6] This discovery is significant for the proper translation of Biblical passages.

The name Resheph appears as a word in Classical Hebrew with the meaning "flame, lightning" (Psalm 78:48) and "a burning fever, a plague" by which the body is "inflamed", Deuteronomy 32:24 but could be understood as archaic language in some instances as a proper name such as in Hab. 3:5 and Job 5:7 in the phrase "sons of Resheph soar in flight".

Resheph as a personal name, a grandson of Ephraim, occurs in 1 Chronicles 7:25.



Resheph with Qetesh and Min.

Notes

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- [3] tablet 1/CAT 1.14, column 1, lines 18-20; tablet 2/CAT 1.15, column 2, line 6
- [4] CAT 1.100, lines 30-31
- [5] Giovanni Pettinato, The Archives of Ebla: An Empire Inscribed in Clay. Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1981 ISBN-0-385-13152-6
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Satet

In Egyptian mythology, **Satet** (also spelt **Satis**, **Satjit**, **Sates**, and **Sati**) was the deification of the floods of the Nile River. Her cult originated in the ancient city of Swenet, now called Aswan on the southern edge of Egypt. Her name means *she who shoots forth* referring to the annual flooding of the river. She was an early war, hunting, and fertility deity who was seen as the mother of the Nile River, Anuket, and a protector of southern Egypt.

One of her titles was *She Who Runs Like an Arrow*, which is thought to refer to the river current, and her symbols became the arrow and the running river. Satet was pictured as a woman wearing the conical crown of Upper Egypt, the Hedjet, with gazelle or antelope horns, or as an antelope, a fast moving creature living near the banks of the river in the southern portion of Ancient Egypt. She also was depicted with a bow and arrows.

Other interpretations say her primary role was that of the war goddess, a guardian of Egypt's southern (Nubian) frontier and killing the enemies of the Pharaoh with her arrows.

She usually is depicted as holding an ankh also, due to her association with the life giving flooding of the Nile. Consequently, Satet acted as a fertility goddess, thus granting the wishes of those who sought love. Satet is also described as offering jars of purifying water.

Later she became regarded as one of the consorts of Khnum, the god identified as the guardian of the source of the Nile, with whom she was worshipped at Elephantine (the First nome of Egypt), indeed the centre of her cult was nearby, at Sahal, another island of the Nile. Since she was most dominant at the southern end of Egypt, she became regarded as the guard of Egypt's southern border with Nubia.



Satis being worshiped by the pharaoh Sobekhotep III of the thirteenth dynasty, a portion of her conical crown, the Hedjet, adorned with antelope horns shows in the fragment - c. 1760 B.C. - Brooklyn Museum

Satet's child was Anuket, goddess of the Nile River herself, who formed the third part of the Elephantine triad of deities when formed.

Satet was also connected with the Eye of Ra.^[1]

References

- [1] Pinch, Geraldine (2004) *Egyptian Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Goddesses, and Traditions of Ancient Egypt*. Oxford University Press. pp. 186–187

Seker

For the name, see Šeker.

For the places in Azerbaijan, see Şəkər.

For the Stargate SG-1 character, see Sokar (Stargate)



Seker
in hieroglyphs

Seker (/ˈsɛkər/; also spelled **Sokar**) is a falcon god of the Memphite necropolis. Although the meaning of his name remains uncertain, the Egyptians in the *Pyramid Texts* linked his name to the anguished cry of Osiris to Isis 'Sy-k-ri' ('hurry to me'),^[1] in the underworld. Seker is strongly linked with two other gods, Ptah the chief god of Memphis and Osiris the god of the dead. In later periods this connection was expressed as the triple god **Ptah-Seker-Osiris**.

Seker was usually depicted as a mummified hawk and sometimes as mound from which the head of a hawk appears. Here he is called 'he who is on his sand'. Sometimes he is shown on his *hennu* barque which was an elaborate sledge for negotiating the sandy necropolis. One of his titles was 'He of Restau' which means the place of 'openings' or tomb

entrances.

In the New Kingdom *Book of the Underworld*, the *Amduat*, he is shown standing on the back of a serpent between two spread wings, as an expression of freedom this suggests a connection with resurrection or perhaps a satisfactory transit of the underworld.^[1] Despite this the region of the underworld associated with Seker was seen as difficult, sandy terrain called the **Imhet** (meaning 'filled up').^[2]

Seker, possibly through his association with Ptah, also has a connection with craftsmen. In the Book of the Dead he is said to fashion silver bowls^[1] and a silver coffin of Sheshonq II has been discovered at Tanis decorated with the iconography of Seker.^[3] In the 1956 movie *The Ten Commandments*, the Pharaoh Rameses II invokes the same deity to bring his deceased firstborn son back to life, while portrayed as wearing dark blue robe with a silver bow.

Seker's cult centre was in Memphis where festivals in his honour were held in the fourth month of the akhet (spring) season. The god was depicted as assisting in various tasks such as digging ditches and canals. From the New Kingdom a similar festival was held in Thebes.^[3]

References

[1] The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses, George Hart ISBN 0-415-34495-6

[2] *The Egyptian Amduat*, Erik Hornung and Theodore Abt ISBN 3-9522608-4-3

[3] The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt, Wilkinson ISBN 0-500-05120-8

Sekhmet

Sekhmet



Sekhmet with head of lioness and a solar disk and uraeus on her head

Goddess of medicine	
Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Memphis, Leontopolis
Symbol	Sun disk, red linen
Consort	Ptah
Parents	Ra
Siblings	Presumably Hathor, Bast, Serket, Shu and Tefnut

In Egyptian mythology, **Sekhmet** ^[1]/ˈsɛk.mɛt/ or **Sachmis** (^[1]/ˈsækmɪs/; also spelled Sakhmet, Sekhet, or Sakhet, among other spellings) was originally the warrior goddess as well as goddess of healing for Upper Egypt. She is depicted as a lioness, the fiercest hunter known to the Egyptians. It was said that her breath created the desert. She was seen as the protector of the pharaohs and led them in warfare.

Her cult was so dominant in the culture that when the first pharaoh of the twelfth dynasty, Amenemhat I, moved the capital of Egypt to Itjtawy, the centre for her cult was moved as well. Religion, the royal lineage, and the authority to govern were intrinsically interwoven in Ancient Egypt during its approximately three thousand years of existence.

Sekhmet also is a solar deity, sometimes called the daughter of the sun god Ra and often associated with the goddesses Hathor and Bast. She bears the solar disk and the uraeus which associates her with Wadjet and royalty. With these associations she can be construed as being a divine arbiter of the goddess Ma'at (Justice, or Order) in the Judgment Hall of Osiris, associating her with the Wedjat (later the Eye of Ra), and connecting her with Tefnut as well.

Etymology

Sekhmet's name comes from the Ancient Egyptian word "sekhem" which means "power". Sekhmet's name suits her function and means "the (one who is) powerful". She also was given titles such as the "(One) Before Whom Evil Trembles", "Mistress of Dread", "Lady of Slaughter" and "She Who Mauls".



This golden cultic object is called an aegis. It is devoted to Sekhmet, highlighting her solar attributes. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

History

In order to placate Sekhmet's wrath, her priestesses performed a ritual before a different statue of the goddess on each day of the year. This practice resulted in many images of the goddess being preserved. Most of her statuettes were rigidly crafted and do not exhibit any expression of movements or dynamism; this design was made to make them last a long time rather than to express any form of functions or actions she is associated with. It is estimated that more than seven hundred statues of Sekhmet once stood in one funerary temple alone, that of Amenhotep III, on the west bank of the Nile.

She was envisioned as a fierce lioness, and in art, was depicted as such, or as a woman with the head of a lioness, who was dressed in red, the colour of blood. Sometimes the dress she wears exhibits a rosetta pattern over each breast, an ancient leonine motif, which can be traced to observation of the shoulder-knot hairs on lions. Occasionally, Sekhmet was also portrayed in her statuettes and engravings with minimal clothing or naked. Tame lions were kept in temples dedicated to Sekhmet at Leontopolis.



Sekhmet from the temple of Mut at Luxor, granite, 1403–1365 BC, in the National Museum, Copenhagen

Festivals and evolution

To pacify Sekhmet, festivals were celebrated at the end of battle, so that the destruction would come to an end. During an annual festival held at the beginning of the year, a festival of intoxication,

the Egyptians danced and played music to soothe the wildness of the goddess and drank great quantities of wine ritually to imitate the extreme drunkenness that stopped the wrath of the goddess—when she almost destroyed humankind. This may relate to averting excessive flooding during the inundation at the beginning of each year as well, when the Nile ran blood-red with the silt from upstream and Sekhmet had to swallow the overflow to save humankind.

In 2006, Betsy Bryan, an archaeologist with Johns Hopkins University excavating at the temple of Mut presented her findings about the festival that included illustrations of the priestesses being served to excess and its adverse effects being ministered to by temple attendants.^[2] Participation in the festival was great, including the priestesses and the population. Historical records of tens of thousands attending the festival exist. These findings were made in the temple of Mut because when Thebes rose to greater prominence, Mut absorbed some characteristics of Sekhmet. These temple excavations at Luxor discovered a "porch of drunkenness" built onto the temple by the Pharaoh Hatshepsut, during the height of her twenty year reign.

In a myth about the end of Ra's rule on the earth, Ra sends Hathor or Sekhmet to destroy mortals who conspired against him. In the myth, Sekhmet's blood-lust was not quelled at the end of battle and led to her destroying almost all of humanity, so Ra poured out beer dyed with red ochre or hematite so that it resembled blood. Mistaking the beer for blood, she became so drunk that she gave up the slaughter and returned peacefully to Ra.^[3]

Sekhmet later was considered to be the mother of Maahes, a deity who appeared during the New Kingdom period. He was seen as a lion prince, the son of the goddess. The late origin of Maahes in the Egyptian pantheon may be the incorporation of a Nubian deity of ancient origin in that culture, arriving during trade and warfare or even, during a period of domination by Nubia. During the Greek dominance in Egypt, note was made of a temple for Maahes that was an auxiliary facility to a large temple to Sekhmet at Taremu in the delta region (likely a temple for Bast originally), a city which the Greeks called Leontopolis, where by that time, an enclosure was provided to house lions.

In popular culture

Death metal band Nile referenced Sekhmet in the title track of their album "Ithyphallic", and in "The Eye Of Ra" on their album *Those Whom the Gods Detest*.

Death metal band Behemoth referenced Sekhmet in the song "Christgrinding Avenue" on their album *The Apostasy*.

Sekhmet is used in *The 39 Clues* book *Beyond the Grave* and is the reason why the characters travel to Cairo.



Image from a ritual Menat necklace, depicting a ritual being performed before a statue of Sekhmet on her throne, she also is flanked by the goddess Wadjet as the cobra and the goddess Nekhbet as the white vulture, symbols of lower and upper Egypt respectively who always were depicted on the crown of Egypt and referred to as the two ladies, and the suppliant holds a complete menat and a sistrum for the ritual, circa 870 B.C. (Berlin, Altes Museum, catalogue number 23733)



The warrior goddess Sekhmet, shown with her sun disk and cobra crown from a relief at the Temple of Kom Ombo.

Sekhmet is also featured in *The Red Pyramid* written by Rick Riordan as a minor antagonist.

Sekhmet is the subject of "Lionheart" a song about the goddess by the symphonic power metal band, Amberian Dawn from their *The Clouds of Northland Thunder* album.

Sekhmet is also mentioned in *Stargate SG-1*. A young girl Anna is created by a German doctor, who is son of a Nazi. Sam, Daniel and Teal'c find artifacts belonging the Goa'uld Sekhmet. Sekhmet is also featured in the *Stargate SG-1* game *Stargate SG-1 Unleashed*.

In *Tutenstein*, an animated TV series about Ancient Egypt, Sekhmet is featured in one of the episodes. She goes on a rampage in the museum and the building site to make people build a pyramid for Tut.

The space vessel "Sekhmet" is a level in the video game *Jet Force Gemini*, a third person shooter developed by Rare in 1999.

Sekhmet is also the name of an alien Aragami in the PlayStation Portable game, *God Eater*.

In the BBC TV series *Sherlock* episode "The Great Game", John Watson believes a cat named Sekhmet is responsible for the death of her owner.

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- [2] "Sex and booze figured in Egyptian rites" (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15475319/>), archaeologists find evidence for ancient version of 'Girls Gone Wild'. From MSNBC, October 30, 2006
- [3] Lichtheim, Miriam (2006) [1976]. *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume Two: The New Kingdom*. University of California Press. pp. 197–199

External links

- Ancient Egypt: the Mythology - Sekhmet (<http://www.egyptianmyths.net/sekhmet.htm>)
- Temple of Sekhmet (<http://www.sekhmettemple.com/index.htm>), in Cactus Springs, Nevada
- "Ancient war goddess statues unearthed in Egypt" (<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=15916>), archaeologists unearth six statues of the lion-headed war goddess Sekhmet in temple of pharaoh Amenhotep III. 2006-03-06

Serapis

Serapis (Σέραπις, Attic/Ionian Greek) or **Sarapis** (Σάραπις, Dorian Greek) is a Graeco-Egyptian god. Serapis was devised during the 3rd century BC on the orders of Ptolemy I of Egypt as a means to unify the Greeks and Egyptians in his realm. The god was depicted as Greek in appearance, but with Egyptian trappings, and combined iconography from a great many cults, signifying both abundance and resurrection. A serapeum (Greek *serapeion*) was any temple or religious precinct devoted to Serapis. The *cultus* of Serapis was spread as a matter of deliberate policy by the Ptolemaic kings, who also built an immense Serapeum in Alexandria.

Serapis continued to increase in popularity during the Roman period, often replacing Osiris as the consort of Isis in temples outside Egypt. In 389, a mob led by the Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria destroyed the Alexandrian Serapeum, but the cult survived until all forms of religion other than Nicene Christianity were suppressed or abolished under Theodosius I in 391.



Marble bust of Serapis wearing a modius
(Louvre)

About the god



This pendant bearing Serapis's likeness would have been worn by a member of elite Egyptian society. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

"Serapis" is the only form used in Latin,^[1] but both Ancient Greek: Σάραπις *Sárapis* and Ancient Greek: Σέραπις *Sérapis* appear in Greek, as well as Ancient Greek: Σαραπο *Serapo* in Bactrian.

His most renowned temple was the Serapeum of Alexandria.^[2] Under Ptolemy Soter, efforts were made to integrate Egyptian religion with that of their Hellenic rulers. Ptolemy's policy was to find a deity that should win the reverence alike of both groups, despite the curses of the Egyptian priests against the gods of the previous foreign rulers (e.g. Set, who was lauded by the Hyksos). Alexander the Great had attempted to use Amun for this purpose, but he was more prominent in Upper Egypt, and not as popular with those in Lower Egypt, where the Greeks had stronger influence. The Greeks had little respect for animal-headed figures, and so a Greek-style anthropomorphic statue was chosen as the idol, and proclaimed as the equivalent of the highly popular Apis.^[3] It was named *Aser-hapi* (i.e. *Osiris-Apis*), which

became **Serapis**, and was said to be Osiris in full, rather than just his Ka (life force).

History

The earliest mention of a Serapis is in the disputed death scene of Alexander (323 BC).^[4] Here, Serapis has a temple at Babylon, and is of such importance that he alone is named as being consulted on behalf of the dying king. His presence in Babylon would radically alter perceptions of the mythologies of this era: the unconnected Babylonian god Ea (Enki) was titled *Serapsi*, meaning 'king of the deep', and it is possible this Serapis is the one referred to in the diaries. The significance of this Serapsi in the Hellenic psyche, due to its involvement in Alexander's death, may have also contributed to the choice of Osiris-Apis as the chief Ptolemaic god.



Bronze votive tablet inscribed to Serapis (2nd century)

According to Plutarch, Ptolemy stole the cult statue from Sinope, having been instructed in a dream by the "unknown god" to bring the statue to Alexandria, where the statue was pronounced to be Serapis by two religious experts. One of the experts was of the Eumolpidae, the ancient family from whose members the hierophant of the Eleusinian Mysteries had been chosen since before history, and the other was the scholarly Egyptian priest Manetho, which gave weight to the judgement both for the Egyptians and the Greeks.

Plutarch may not be correct, however, as some Egyptologists allege that the Sinope in the tale is really the hill of Sinopeion, a name given to the site of the already existing Serapeum at Memphis. Also, according to Tacitus, Serapis (i.e., Apis explicitly identified as Osiris in full) had been the god of the village of Rhakotis before it expanded into the great capital of Alexandria.



High Clerk in the Cult of Serapis,
Altes Museum, Berlin

The statue suitably depicted a figure resembling Hades or Pluto, both being kings of the Greek underworld, and was shown enthroned with the modius, a basket/grain-measure, on his head, since it was a Greek symbol for the land of the dead. He also held a sceptre in his hand indicating his rulership, with Cerberus, gatekeeper of the underworld, resting at his feet, and it also had what appeared to be a serpent at its base, fitting the Egyptian symbol of rulership, the uraeus.

With his (i.e. Osiris's) wife Isis, and their son Horus (in the form of Harpocrates), Serapis won an important place in the Greek world. In his *Description of Greece*, Pausanias notes two *Serapeia* on the slopes of Acrocorinth, above the rebuilt Roman city of Corinth and one at Copae in Boeotia.^[5]

Serapis was among the international deities whose cult was received and disseminated throughout the Roman Empire, with Anubis sometimes identified with Cerberus. At Rome, Serapis was worshiped in the Iseum Campense, the sanctuary of Isis built during the Second Triumvirate in the Campus Martius. The

Roman cults of Isis and Serapis gained in popularity late in the 1st century when Vespasian experienced events he attributed to their miraculous agency while he was in Alexandria, where he stayed before returning to Rome as emperor in 70. From the Flavian Dynasty on, Serapis was one of the deities who might appear on imperial coinage with the reigning emperor.

The main cult at Alexandria survived until the late 4th century, when a Christian mob destroyed the Serapeum of Alexandria in 385, and the cult was part of the general proscription of religions other than approved forms of Christianity under the Theodosian decree.

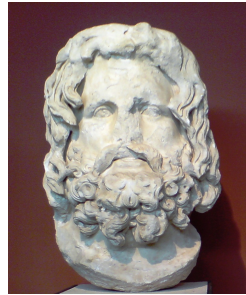
Gallery



Oil lamp with a bust of Serapis, flanked by a crescent moon and star (Roman-era Ephesus, 100-150)



Statuette possibly of Serapis (but note the herculean club) from Begram, Afghanistan



Head of Sarapis (150-200)



Head of Serapis, from a 12-foot statue found off the coast of Alexandria



Serapis on Roman Egypt, Alexandria, Billon Tetradrachm



Head of Serapis (Roman-era Hellenistic terracotta, Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst, Munich)

Notes

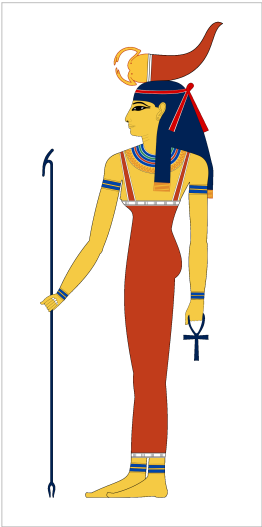
- [1] Consulting the unabridged Lewis Latin lexicon shows that "Serapis" was the only Latin version of the name in antiquity:
- [2] "Of the Egyptian sanctuaries of Serapis the most famous is at Alexandria", Pausanias noted (*Description of Greece*, 1.18.4, 2nd century AD), in describing the Serapeion at Athens erected by Ptolemy on the steep slope of the Acropolis: "As you descend from here to the lower part of the city, is a sanctuary of Serapis, whose worship the Athenians introduced from Ptolemy."
- [3] According to Sir J.G. Frazer's note to the *Bibliotheca* of Pseudo-Apollodorus, 2.1.1: "Apollodorus identifies the Argive Apis with the Egyptian bull Apis, who was in turn identified with Serapis (Sarapis)"; Pausanias also conflates Serapis and Egyptian Apis: "Of the Egyptian sanctuaries of Serapis the most famous is at Alexandria, the oldest at Memphis. Into this neither stranger nor priest may enter, until they bury Apis" (Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 1.18.4).
- [4] Reported from Arrian, *Anabasis*, VII. 26.
- [5] Pausanias 2.4.5 and 9.24.1.

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- E. R. Bevan: The House of Ptolemy, Chapter. II (http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/Africa/Egypt/_Texts/BEVHOP/2*.html#Sarapis_cult)
 - James Grout: "Temple of Serapis", part of the *Encyclopædia Romana* (http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/greece/paganism/serapeum.html)
 - "Immoralities of the Gods: Of the fugitive Serapis chased from Sinope to Alexandria" (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf02.iv.ii.i.ix.html>), by Theophilus of Antioch
 - "Greco-Egyptian Mythology: The Alexandrian Synthesis" (<http://www.grecoegipcio.galeon.com/english.htm>)
-

Serket

Serket



the Egyptian goddess Serket. She is often depicted as a woman with a scorpion gracing her crown.

Name in hieroglyphs	[1]
Symbol	Scorpion
Parents	Ra
Siblings	presumably Hathor, Sekhmet, Bast

Serket /'sɜr,kɛt/, also known as **Selket**, **Serqet** or **Selcis** /'sɛlsɪs/, is the goddess of healing poisonous stings and bites in Egyptian mythology, originally the deification of the scorpion.^[2]

Scorpion stings lead to paralysis and Serket's name describes this, as it means *(she who) tightens the throat*, however, Serket's name also can be read as meaning *(she who) causes the throat to breathe*, and so, as well as being seen as stinging the unrighteous, Serket was seen as one who could cure scorpion stings and the effects of other poisons such as snake bites.

In Ancient Egyptian art, Serket was shown as a scorpion (a symbol found on the earliest artifacts of the culture, such as the protodynastic period), or as a woman with a scorpion on her head. Although Serket does not appear to have had any temples, she had a sizable number of priests in many communities.

The most dangerous species of scorpion resides in North Africa, and its sting may kill, so Serket was considered a highly important goddess, and was sometimes considered by pharaohs to be their patron. Her close association with the early kings implies that she was their protector, two being referred to as the scorpion kings.

As the protector against poisons and snake bites, Serket often was said to protect the deities from Apep, the great snake-demon of evil, sometimes being depicted as the guard when Apep was captured.

As many of the venomous creatures of Egypt could prove fatal, Serket also was considered a protector of the dead, particularly being associated with poisons and fluids causing stiffening. She was thus said to be the protector of the tents of embalmers, and of the canopic jar associated with poison—the jar of the intestine—which was deified later as *Qebehsenuf*, one of the Four sons of Horus.

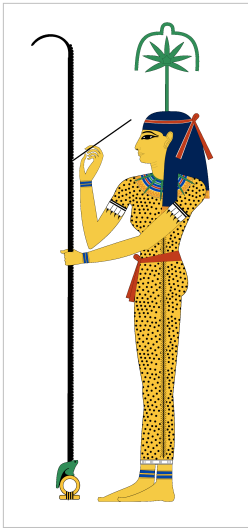
As the guard of one of the canopic jars and a protector, Serket gained a strong association with Aset (Isis), Nebet Het (Nephthys), and Neith who also performed similar functions. Eventually, later in Egyptian history that spanned thousands of years and whose pantheon evolved toward a merger of many deities, Serket began to be identified with

Isis, sharing imagery and parentage, until finally, Serket became said to be merely an aspect of Isis, whose cult had become very dominant.

References

- [2] Pharaonic Gods (<http://www.egyptianmuseum.gov.eg/selket.html>) Egyptian Museum

Seshat

Seshat	
	
Seshat, depicted in a leopard skin, inscribing the years of reign for the king on the palm-leaf rib which served for tallying up the years and so had become the hieroglyph for "year". ^[1]	
Goddess of writing and wisdom	
Symbol	Unknown seven-pointed emblem above her head. ^{[2][3][4][5]}
Consort	Thoth (in some accounts)
Parents	Ra (in some accounts) or Thoth ?
Siblings	presumably Maat

In Egyptian mythology, **Seshat** (also spelled **Safkhet**, **Sesat**, **Seshet**, **Sesheta**, and **Seshata**) was the Ancient Egyptian goddess of wisdom, knowledge, and writing. She was seen as a scribe and record keeper, and her name means *she who scrivens* (i.e. *she who is the scribe*), and is credited with inventing writing. She also became identified as the goddess of architecture, astronomy, astrology, building, mathematics, and surveying. These are all professions that relied upon expertise in her skills. She is identified as Safekh-Aubi in some late texts.^[6]

Mistress of the House of Books is another title for Seshat, being the deity whose priests oversaw the library in which scrolls of the most important knowledge were assembled and spells were preserved. One prince of the fourth dynasty, Wep-em-nefret, is noted as the *Overseer of the Royal Scribes, Priest of Seshat* on a slab stela. Heliopolis was the location of her principal sanctuary. She is described as the goddess of history.

In art, she was depicted as a woman with a seven-pointed emblem above her head. It is unclear what this emblem represents.^{[2][3][4][5]} Pharaoh Tuthmosis III (1479-1425 BCE) called her Sefket-Abwy (She of seven points). Spell 10 of the Coffin Texts states "Seshat opens the door of heaven for you."

Usually, she is shown holding a palm stem, bearing notches to denote the recording of the passage of time, especially for keeping track of the allotment of time for the life of the pharaoh. She was also depicted holding other tools and, often, holding the knotted cords that were stretched to survey land and structures.

She is frequently shown dressed in a cheetah or leopard hide, a symbol of funerary priests. If not shown with the hide over a dress, the pattern of the dress is that of the spotted feline. The pattern on the natural hide was thought to represent the stars, being a symbol of eternity, and to be associated with the night sky.

As the divine measurer and scribe, Seshat was believed to appear to assist the pharaoh in both of these practices. It was she who recorded, by notching her palm, the time allotted to the pharaoh for his stay on earth.

Seshat assisted the pharaoh in the "stretching the cord" ritual. This ritual is related to laying out the foundations of temples and other important structures in order to determine and assure the sacred alignments and the precision of the dimensions. Her skills were necessary for surveying the land after the annual floods to reestablish boundary lines. The priestess who officiated at these functions in her name also oversaw the staff of others who performed similar duties and were trained in mathematics and the related store of knowledge.

Much of this knowledge was considered quite sacred and not shared beyond the ranks of the highest professionals such as architects and certain scribes. She also was responsible for recording the speeches the pharaoh made during the crowning ceremony and approving the inventory of foreign captives and goods gained in military campaigns. During the New Kingdom, she was involved in the Sed festival held by the pharaohs who could celebrate thirty years of reign.

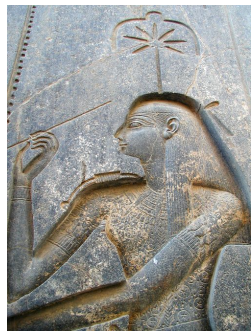
Later, when the cult of the moon deity, Thoth, became prominent and he became identified as a god of wisdom, the role of Seshat changed in the Egyptian pantheon when counterparts were created for most older deities. The lower ranks of her priestesses were displaced by the priests of Thoth. First, she was identified as his daughter, and later as his wife.

After the pairing with Thoth the emblem of Seshat was shown surmounted by a crescent moon, which, over time, degenerated into being shown as two horns arranged to form a crescent shape, but pointing downward (in an atypical fashion for Egyptian art). When the crescent moon symbol had degenerated into the horns, she sometimes was known as **Safekh-Aubi**, meaning *she who wears the two horns*.^[citation needed] In a few images the *horns* resemble two cobras, as depicted in hieroglyphs, but facing each other with heads touching.

Gallery



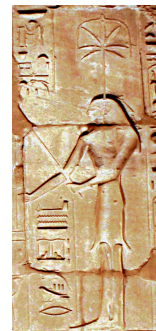
Hatshepsut with goddess Seshat.



Seshat carved on the back of the throne of the seated statue of Rameses II in the Amun temple at Luxor. It dates from around 1250 BCE.^[7]



Seshat. Same carving, full length.



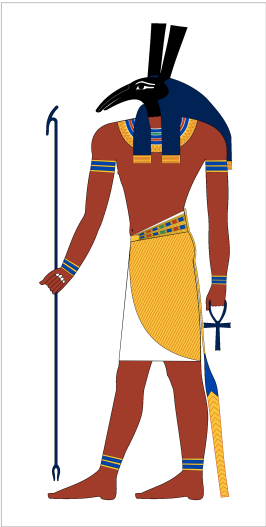
Seshat, at the Karnak Temple Complex.

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- [1] Seshat in Luxor (<http://www.recoveredsience.com/const288seshatluxor.htm>). H. Peter Aleff. See also Huh (god).
 - [2] Wilkinson, Richard H. (2003). *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. Thames & Hudson. p. 166. ISBN 0-500-05120-8.
 - [3] *In Search of Cosmic Order: Selected Essays on Egyptian Archaeoastronomy*. Editors: Juan Antonio Belmonte, Mosalam Shaltout. Contributor: Zahi Hawass. Publisher: American University in Cairo Press, 2010. ISBN 9789774794834. In chapter 7 on page 197 (http://books.google.com/books?id=COoYkSabGVAC&pg=PA197&dq=seshat&hl=en&ei=u6YbTZ2QPIH78Abgm8isDg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=seshat&f=false) it says, "The sign held by Seshat over her head has given rise to many attempts to offer an explanation for this rare feature, but none has yielded a definitive conclusion."
 - [4] Seshat and her tools (<http://www.recoveredsience.com/const201seshathempmath.htm>). H. Peter Aleff. From his article: Many Egyptologists have long speculated about the emblem which Seshat wore as her head dress. Sir Alan Gardiner described it in his still category-leading "Egyptian Grammar" as a "conventionalized flower (?) surmounted by horns". His question mark after "flower" reflects the fact that there is no likely flower which resembles this design. Others have called it a "star surmounted by a bow", but stars in the ancient Egyptian convention had five points, not seven like the image in Seshat's emblem. This number was so important that it caused king Tuthmosis III (1479 to 1425 BCE) to call this goddess Sefkhet-Abwy, or "She of the seven points".
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-

Set (mythology)

Set



God of storms, the desert, and chaos

Major cult center	Ombos
Symbol	The was scepter
Consort	Nephthys, Tawaret (in some accounts), Anat, Astarte
Parents	Geb and Nut
Siblings	Osiris, Isis, Nephthys
Offspring	Anubis (in some accounts)

or

or

Seth
in hieroglyphs

Set /sɛt/ or **Seth** (/sɛθ/; also spelled Setesh, Sutekh, Setekh, or Suty) is a god of the desert, storms, and foreigners in ancient Egyptian religion. In later myths he is also the god of darkness and chaos. In Ancient Greek, the god's name is given as *Sēth* (Σήθ).

In Egyptian mythology, Set is portrayed as the usurper who killed and mutilated his own brother Osiris. Osiris' wife Isis reassembled Osiris' corpse and embalmed him. Osiris' son Horus sought revenge upon Set, and the myths describe their conflicts. The death of Osiris and the battle between Horus and Set is a popular event in Egyptian mythology.

Family

His wife is originally Nephthys and in some accounts had relationships with other goddesses: Tawaret, Anat, and Astarte.

His child in some accounts is Anubis while in others it is Thoth.

His siblings are Osiris, Isis, and Nephthys.

Origin

The meaning of the name *Seth* is unknown, thought to have been originally pronounced *Sūtaḥ based on the occurrence of his name in Egyptian hieroglyphs (*swtḥ*), and his later mention in the Coptic documents with the name *Sēt*.^[1]

Set animal

In art, Set is mostly depicted as a fabulous creature, referred to by Egyptologists as the *Set animal* or *Typhonic beast*. The animal has a curved snout, long, rectangular ears, a forked tail, and canine body; sometimes, Set is depicted as a human with only the head of the *Set animal*. It does not resemble any known creature, although it could be seen as a composite of an armadillo, a donkey, a jackal, or a fennec fox. Some early Egyptologists have proposed that it was a stylised representation of the giraffe, due to the large flat-topped 'horns' which correspond to a giraffe's ossicones. However, the Egyptians make a distinction between the giraffe and the Set animal. In the Late Period, Set is depicted as a donkey or with the head of a donkey.^[2]

The earliest representations of what may be the Set animal comes from a tomb dating to the Naqada I phase of the Predynastic Period (3790 BC–3500 BC), though this identification is uncertain. If these are ruled out, then the earliest *Set-animal* appears on a mace head of the King Scorpion, a protodynastic ruler. The head and the forked tail of the Set animal are clearly present.^[3]

Conflict between Horus and Set

In the mythology of Heliopolis, Set was born of the sky goddess Nut and the earth god Geb. Set's sister and wife was Nephthys. Nut and Geb also produced another two children who became husband and wife: the divine Osiris and Isis, whose son was Horus. The myth of Set's conflict with Horus, Osiris, and Isis appears in many Egyptian sources, including the Pyramid Texts, the Coffin Texts, the Shabaka Stone, inscriptions on the walls of the temple of Horus at Edfu, and various papyrus sources. The Chester Beatty Papyrus No. 1 contains the legend known as The Contendings of Horus and Set. Classical authors also recorded the story, notably Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*.^[4]

These myths generally portray Osiris as a wise lord, king, and bringer of civilization, happily married to his sister, Isis. Set was envious of his brother, and he killed and dismembered Osiris. Isis reassembled Osiris' corpse and embalmed him. As the archetypal mummy, Osiris reigned over the afterworld as a king among deserving spirits of the dead. Osiris' son Horus was conceived by Isis with Osiris' corpse. Horus naturally became the enemy of Set, and the myths describe their conflicts. Some Egyptologists have reconstructed these as Set poking out Horus's left eye, and Horus retaliating by castrating Set. However the references to an eye and testicles appear more indirect, referring to the evil Set sexually abusing the young Horus, who protects himself by deflecting the seed of Set, which can be construed as the theft of Set's virile power.^[5]

It has also been suggested that the myth may reflect historical events. According to the Shabaka Stone, Geb divided Egypt into two halves, giving Upper Egypt (the desert south) to Set and Lower Egypt (the region of the delta in the north) to Horus, in order to end their feud. However, according to the stone, in a later judgment Geb gave all Egypt to Horus. Interpreting this myth as a historical record would lead one to believe that Lower Egypt (Horus' land) conquered Upper Egypt (Set's land); but, in fact Upper Egypt conquered Lower Egypt. So the myth cannot be simply interpreted.

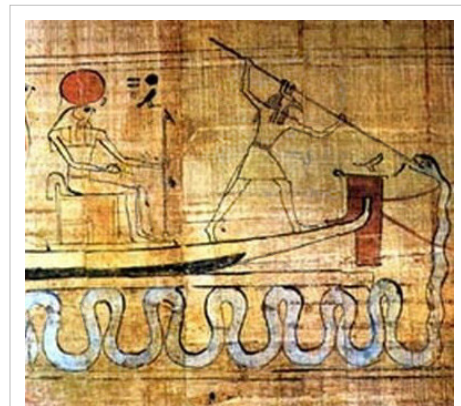
Several theories exist to explain the discrepancy. For instance, since both Horus and Set were worshipped in Upper Egypt prior to unification, perhaps the myth reflects a struggle within Upper Egypt prior to unification, in which a Horus-worshipping group subjugated a Set-worshipping group. What is known is that during the Second Dynasty, there was a period in which the King Peribsen's name or Serekh — which had been surmounted by a Horus falcon in the First Dynasty — was for a time surmounted by a Set animal, suggesting some kind of religious struggle. It was ended at the end of the dynasty by Khasekhemwy, who surmounted his Serekh with both a falcon of Horus and a Set animal, indicating some kind of compromise had been reached.

Regardless, once the two lands were united, Set and Horus were often shown together crowning the new pharaohs, as a symbol of their power over both Lower and Upper Egypt. Queens of the First Dynasty bore the title "She Who Sees Horus and Set." The Pyramid Texts present the pharaoh as a fusion of the two deities. Evidently, pharaohs believed that they balanced and reconciled competing cosmic principles. Eventually the dual-god Horus-Set appeared, combining features of both deities (as was common in Egyptian theology, the most familiar example being Amun-Ra).

Later Egyptians interpreted the myth of the conflict between Set and Osiris/Horus as an analogy for the struggle between the desert (represented by Set) and the fertilizing floods of the Nile (Osiris/Horus).

Protector of Ra

Set was depicted standing on the prow of Ra's night barque spearing Apep in the form of a serpent, turtle, or other dangerous water animals. In some Late Period representations, such as in the Persian Period temple at Hibis in the Khargah Oasis, Set was represented in this role with a falcon's head, taking on the guise of Horus. In the Amduat Set is described as having a key role in overcoming Apep.



Set speared Apep

Set in the Second Intermediate and Ramesside Periods

During the Second Intermediate Period, a group of Asiatic foreign chiefs known as the Hyksos (literally, "rulers of foreign lands") gained the rulership of Egypt, and ruled the Nile Delta, from Avaris. They chose Set, originally Upper Egypt's chief god, the god of foreigners and the god they found most similar to their own chief god, as their patron, and then Set became worshiped as the chief god once again.

The Hyksos King Apophis is recorded as worshiping Set in a monolatric way: "*[He] chose for his Lord the god Seth. He didn't worship any other deity in the whole land except Seth.*" Jan Assmann argues that because the Ancient Egyptians could never conceive of a "lonely" god lacking personality, Seth the desert god, who was worshiped exclusively, represented a manifestation of evil.^[6]

When Ahmose I overthrew the Hyksos and expelled them from Egypt, Egyptian attitudes towards Asiatic foreigners became xenophobic, and royal propaganda discredited the period of Hyksos rule. Nonetheless, the Set cult at Avaris flourished, and the Egyptian garrison of Ahmose stationed there became part of the priesthood of Set.

The founder of the Nineteenth Dynasty, Ramesses I came from a military family from Avaris with strong ties to the priesthood of Set. Several of the Ramesside kings were named for Set, most notably Seti I (literally, "man of Set") and Setnakht (literally, "Set is strong"). In addition, one of the garrisons of Ramesses II held Set as its patron deity, and Ramesses II erected the so-called *Four Hundred Years' Stele* at Pi-Ramesses, commemorating the 400 year anniversary of the Set cult in the Delta.

Set also became associated with foreign gods during the New Kingdom, particularly in the Delta. Set was also identified by the Egyptians with the Hittite deity Teshub, who was a storm god like Set.

Demonization of Set

Herman te Velde dates the demonization of Set to after Egypt's conquest by several foreign nations in the Third Intermediate and Late Periods. Set, who had traditionally been the god of foreigners, thus also became associated with foreign oppressors, including the Assyrian and Persian empires.^[7] It was during the time that Set was particularly vilified, and his defeat by Horus widely celebrated.

Set's negative aspects were emphasized during this period. Set was the killer of Osiris, having hacked Osiris' body into pieces and dispersed it so that he could not be resurrected. The Greeks later linked Set with Typhon because both were evil forces, storm deities, and sons of the Earth that attacked the main gods.

Nevertheless, throughout this period, in some outlying regions of Egypt Set was still regarded as the heroic chief deity.

Temples

Set was worshipped at the temples of Ombos (Nubt near Naqada) and Ombos (Nubt near Kom Ombo), at Oxyrhynchus in upper Egypt, and also in part of the Fayyum area.

More specifically, Set was worshipped in the relatively large metropolitan (yet provincial) locale of Sepermeru, especially during the Rammeside Period.^[8] There, Seth was honored with an important temple called the "House of Seth, Lord of Sepermeru." One of the epithets of this town was "gateway to the desert," which fits well with Set's role as a deity of the frontier regions of ancient Egypt. At Sepermeru, Set's temple enclosure included a small secondary shrine called "The House of Seth, Powerful-Is-His-Mighty-Arm," and Ramesses II himself built (or modified) a second land-owning temple for Nephthys, called "The House of Nephthys of Ramesses-Meriamun."^[9]

There is no question, however, that the two temples of Seth and Nephthys in Sepermeru were under separate administration, each with its own holdings and prophets.^[10] Moreover, another moderately sized temple of Seth is noted for the nearby town of Pi-Wayna.^[11] The close association of Seth temples with temples of Nephthys in key outskirt-towns of this *milieu* is also reflected in the likelihood that there existed another "House of Seth" and another "House of Nephthys" in the town of Su, at the entrance to the Fayyum.^[12]

Perhaps most intriguing in terms of the pre-Twentieth Dynasty connections between temples of Set and nearby temples of his consort Nephthys is the evidence of Papyrus Bologna, which preserves a most irritable complaint lodged by one Pra'em-hab, Prophet of the "House of Seth" in the now-lost town of Punodjem ("The Sweet Place"). In the text of Papyrus Bologna, the harried Pra'em-hab laments undue taxation for his own temple (The House of Seth) and goes on to lament that he is also saddled with responsibility for: "the ship, and I am likewise also responsible for the House of Nephthys, along with the remaining heap of district temples".^[13]

It is unfortunate, perhaps, that we have no means of knowing the particular theologies of the closely connected Set and Nephthys temples in these districts—it would be interesting to learn, for example, the religious tone of temples of Nephthys located in such proximity to those of Seth, especially given the seemingly contrary Osirian loyalties of Seth's consort-goddess. When, by the Twentieth Dynasty, the "demonization" of Seth was ostensibly inaugurated, Seth was either eradicated or increasingly pushed to the outskirts, Nephthys flourished as part of the usual Osirian pantheon throughout Egypt, even obtaining a Late Period status as tutelary goddess of her own Nome (UU Nome VII, "Hwt-Sekhem"/Diospolis Parva) and as the chief goddess of the Mansion of the Sistrum in that district.^{[14][15][16][17]}

Yet, it is perhaps most telling that Seth's cultus persisted with astonishing potency even into the latter days of ancient Egyptian religion, in outlying (but important) places like Kharga, Dakhlah, Deir el-Hagar, Mut, Kellis, etc. Indeed, in these places, Seth was considered "Lord of the Oasis/Town" and Nephthys was likewise venerated as "Mistress of

the Oasis" at Seth's side, in his temples^[18] (esp. the dedication of a Nephthys-cult statue). Meanwhile, Nephthys was also venerated as "Mistress" in the Osirian temples of these districts, as part of the specifically Osirian college.^[19] It would appear that the ancient Egyptians in these locales had little problem with the paradoxical dualities inherent in venerating Seth and Nephthys as juxtaposed against Osiris, Isis & Nephthys. Further study of the enormously important role of Seth in ancient Egyptian religion (particularly after the Twentieth Dynasty) is imperative.

The power of Seth's cult in the mighty (yet outlying) city of Avaris from the Second Intermediate Period through the Ramesside Period cannot be denied. There he reigned supreme as a deity both at odds and in league with threatening foreign powers, and in this case, his chief consort-goddesses were the Phoenicians Anat and Astarte, with Nephthys merely one of the harem.^[citation needed]

In popular culture

The Kane Chronicles trilogy, by Rick Riordan.

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External links

- Le temple d'Hibis, oasis de Khargha (http://alain.guilleux.free.fr/khargha_hibis/khargha_temple_hibis.html): *Hibis Temple representations of Sutekh as Horus*

Shai

For the 1990s R&B group, see Shai (band); for the forebear of Mossad see Shai (Haganah unit).

Shai (also spelt **Sai**, occasionally **Shay**, and in Greek, **Psais**) was the deification of the concept of fate in Egyptian mythology.^[1] As a concept, with no particular reason for associating one gender over another, Shai was sometimes considered female, rather than the more usual understanding of being male, in which circumstance Shai was referred to as **Shait** (simply the feminine form of the name). His name reflects his function, as it means (*that which is*) *ordained*.

As the god of fate, it was said that he determined the span of each man's life, and was present at the judgement of the soul of the deceased in duat. In consequence, he was sometimes identified as the husband of Mesenet, goddess of birth, or, in later years, of Renenutet, who assigned the Ren, and had become considered goddess of fortune. Because of the power associated in the concept, Akhenaten, in introducing monotheism, said that Shai was an attribute of Aten, whereas Ramses II claimed to be *lord of Shai* (i.e. *lord of fate*).

During Ptolemaic Egypt, Shai, as god of fate, was identified with the Greek god Agathodaemon, who was the god of fortune telling. Thus, since Agathodaemon was considered to be a serpent, and the word *Shai* was also the Egyptian word for *pig*, in the Hellenic period, Shai was sometimes depicted as a serpent-headed pig, known to Egyptologists as the *Shai animal*.

References

Shed (deity)

Shed is an Ancient Egyptian deity, popularly called, "the savior" and is first recorded after the Amarna Period.^[2] Representing the concept of salvation he is identified with Horus and in particular "*Horus the Child*".^[3] Rather than have formal worship in a temple or as an official cult, he appears to have been a god that ordinary Egyptians looked to to save them from illness, misfortune or danger.^[4] He is shown on the Metternich Stela as vanquishing danger in the form of a serpent, a scorpion and a crocodile.^[5]

The rise of "*Savior*" names in personal piety during the Amarna period has been interpreted as the popular response of ordinary people to the attempts by Akhenaten to proscribe the ancient religion

of Egypt. Shed has also been viewed as a form of the ancient Semitic god Reshef.^[6] Shed can be depicted as a young prince overcoming snakes, lions and crocodiles.^[7]

Shed has been viewed as a form of savior, a helper for those in need when state authority or the king's help is wanting. The increased reliance on divine assistance could even extend to saving a person from the underworld, even



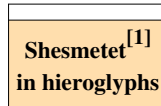
Amulet depicting Shed subduing dangerous animals.^[1]

to providing a substitute, and lengthening a person's time in this world. In the New Kingdom Shed "the savior" is addressed on countless stelae by people searching or praising him for help.^[8]

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Shesmetet



Shesmetet (*šsm.t.t*) is an ancient Egyptian goddess. She was mentioned in the *Pyramid Texts*^[2] and was usually referred to as the deceased's mother. She was depicted as a lion or a woman with a lion's head and thus was sometimes considered a form of Sekhmet or Bastet, but one of her epithets – "Lady of Punt" – differentiates her from them and may refer to a possible African origin. Her name comes from *shesmet*, a sash decorated with beads, which appears on the depictions of Old Kingdom rulers and the god Sopdu.^[3]

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Shezmu

Shezmu (also known as **Shesmu**, **Schezemu**, **Schesmu**, **Shesemu**, **Shezmou**, **Shesmou**, **Sezmu** and **Sesmu**) is the ancient Egyptian demonic god of execution, slaughter, blood, oil, wine and perfume. Like many of the gods of Ancient Egypt, Shezmu was of a complex nature. He had qualities of both light and darkness, but this was not the reason that he was known as a 'demon'. To the Egyptians, like other African gods, demons were not necessarily evil in nature. Often they were quite helpful. Instead, the term "demon" was given to Shezmu because he was one of the lesser deities, and due to his relation to the underworld.

Role

Shezmu was the demonic god of red wine, slaughter, and sometimes perfumes or oils. The link between blood and the crimson color of wine is clear. Shezmu was known to destroy wrongdoers, gruesomely putting their heads in winepresses to remove the blood. He was known as the 'Executioner of Osiris'. Shezmu followed the commands of The God of The Dead, and therefore was sometimes given the title 'Slaughterer of Souls'. He initially seems to be a fierce underworld deity, but Shezmu was quite helpful to the dead. Although he was a harsh executioner of the wicked, he was also a great protector of the virtuous. Shezmu offered red wine to those who had passed on. Other than wine, he was in charge of earthly objects such as embalming oils, and perfumes.

Among the gods, his job was to use the bodies and blood of the dead to create sustenance for Unas. Osiris was the one who ordered the use of the wicked one's blood to be turned to wine. He was sometimes given the title 'Demon of the Wine Press'. On a darker note, Shezmu's affinity with the color red linked him to evil. Crimson was a feared and hated color among the Egyptians. Not only is it the universal color of blood, and therefore death, but it was the color of the god of chaos, Seth. Since it was also the color of the setting sun, red was associated with the coming darkness and the reign of Apophis the serpent demon.

He appeared to have the head of a lion, fangs and mane drenched in blood. It is said he wore human skulls around his waist like a belt.

Depiction and worship

Like many other Egyptian deities, Shezmu was sometimes depicted as a man or a man with the head of a falcon. To link him further with blood and destruction, he took the form of a man with a leonine head. This perhaps was a bridge between him and Sekhmet, the goddess of vengeance. Furthermore, he is associated with Nefertem through both his appearance and the connection with perfumes.

Shezmu seemed to be both represented as a great evil and an entity of good. In many places he is held in high regards by the god Osiris, and is worshipped as a protector god. However, he was also feared as the unyielding punisher of the damned. His greatest cult was centered in Faiyum, but his worshippers were also widely distributed in Dendera and Edfu.

Changes

Due to its colour, red wine became strongly identified with blood, and thus Shezmu was identified as *lord of blood*. Since wine was seen as a good thing, his association with blood was considered one of righteousness, making him considered an executioner of the unrighteous, being the *slaughterer of souls*. When the main form of execution was by beheading, it was said that Shezmu ripped off the heads of those who were wicked, and threw them into a wine press, to be crushed into red wine, which was given to the righteous dead. Beheading was commonly carried out by the victim resting their head on a wooden block, and so Shezmu was referred to as *Overthrower of the Wicked at the Block*. This violent aspect led to depiction, in art, as a lion-headed man, thus being known as *fierce of face*. In later

times, Egyptians used the wine press for producing oils instead of wine, which was produced by crushing under foot instead. Consequently, Shezmu became associated with unguents and embalming oils, and thus the preservation of the body, and of beauty.

Notes

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Shu (Egyptian deity)

Shu



Shu is shown holding the sky above his head.

God of the wind and air

Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Heliopolis, Leontopolis
Symbol	the ostrich feather
Consort	Tefnut
Parents	Ra-Atum and Iusaaset
Siblings	Tefnut Hathor Sekhmet

Shu (/ʃuː/; meaning "emptiness" and "he who rises up") was one of the primordial gods in Egyptian mythology, a personification of air, one of the Ennead of Heliopolis.

Family

He was created by Atum, his father and Iusaaset, his mother in the city of Heliopolis. With his sister Tefnut (moisture), he was the father of Nut and Geb. His daughter, Nut, was the sky goddess whom he held over the Earth (Geb), separating the two. The Egyptians believed that if Shu didn't hold his son and daughter (the god of the earth and the goddess of the sky) apart there would be no way life could be created.

Shu's grandchildren are Osiris, Isis, Set and Nephthys. His great-grandsons are Horus and Anubis.

Myths

As the air, Shu was considered to be cooling, and thus calming, influence, and pacifier. Due to the association with air, calm, and thus Ma'at (truth, justice and order), Shu was portrayed in art as wearing an ostrich feather. Shu was seen with between one and four feathers.

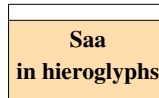
In a much later myth, representing the terrible weather disaster at the end of the Old Kingdom, it was said that Tefnut and Shu once argued, and Tefnut left Egypt for Nubia (which was always more temperate). It was said that Shu quickly decided that he missed her, but she changed into a cat that destroyed any man or god that approached. Thoth, disguised, eventually succeeded in convincing her to return.

He carries an ankh, the symbol of life.

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- Adolf Erman: *Die Aegyptische Religion*, Verlag Georg Reimer, Berlin 1909
- Wolfgang Helck: *Kleines Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, 1999 ISBN 3-447-04027-0, S. 269f. → Shu

Sia (god)



In Egyptian mythology, **Sia** or **Saa** was the deification of perception in the Heliopolitan Ennead cosmogony and is probably equivalent to the intellectual energies of the heart of Ptah in the Memphite cosmogeny.^[1] He also had a connection with writing and was often shown in anthropomorphic form ^[2] holding a papyrus scroll. This papyrus was thought to embody intellectual achievements.^[3]

It was said that Atum created the two gods Sia and Hu from his blood spilled while cutting his own penis, a possible reference to circumcision.^[4]

Sia appeared standing on the Solar barge during its journey through the night in New Kingdom underworld texts and tomb decorations,^[5] together with Hu, "creative utterance" and Heka (god) the god of magic. These gods were seen as special powers helping the creator, and although Heka had his own cult Sia did not.^[6]

Hieroglyph: Sia

The Sia (hieroglyph) was also used to represent "to perceive", "to know" or "to be cognizant".

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 - [5] The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt, Wilkinson ISBN 0-500-05120-8
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Sobek

Sobek	
	
The Nile, The Army and Military, Fertility	
Name in hieroglyphs	Sobek in hieroglyphs Sobek, shortened writing in hieroglyphs
Major cult center	Crocodilopolis, Faiyum, Kom Ombo
Symbol	crocodile
Parents	Set and Neith
Siblings	Anubis

Sobek (also called **Sebek**, **Sochet**, **Sobk**, **Sobki**, **Soknopais**), and in Greek, **Suchos** (Σοῦχος) was an ancient Egyptian deity with a complex and fluid nature.^[1] He is associated with the Nile crocodile and is either represented in its form or as a human with a crocodile head. Sobek was also associated with pharaonic power, fertility, and military prowess, but served additionally – and quite contrarily – as a protective deity with apotropaic qualities, invoked particularly for protection against the dangers presented by the Nile river.

History



This statue of Sobek was found at Amenemhat III's mortuary temple (which was connected to his pyramid at Hawara in the Faiyum), serving as a testament to this king's devotion to Sobek. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Sobek enjoyed a longstanding presence in the ancient Egyptian pantheon, from the Old Kingdom (c. 2686—2181 BCE) through the Roman period (c. 30 BCE—350 CE). He is first known from several different Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom, particularly from spell PT 317.^[2] The spell, which praises the pharaoh as living incarnation of the crocodile god, reads:

“Unis is Sobek, green of plumage, with alert face and raised fore, the splashing one who came from the thigh and tail of the great goddess in the sunlight...Unis has appeared as Sobek, Neith's son. Unis will eat with his mouth, Unis will urinate and Unis will copulate with his penis.

Unis is lord of semen, who takes women from their husbands to the place Unis likes according to his heart's fancy.”^[3]

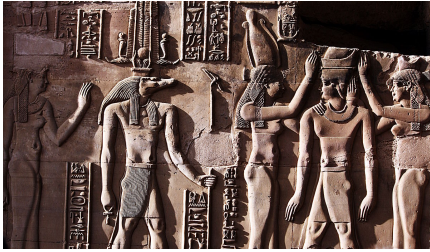
As one can understand from this text alone, Sobek was considered a violent, hyper-sexual, and erratic deity, prone to his primal whims. The origin of his name, *Sbk*^[4] in ancient Egyptian, is debated among scholars, but many believe that it is derived from a causative of the verb “to impregnate.”^[5]

Though Sobek was worshipped in the Old Kingdom, he truly gained prominence in the Middle Kingdom (c. 2055—1650 BCE), most notably under the Twelfth Dynasty king, Amenemhat III. Amenemhat III had taken a particular interest in the Faiyum region of Egypt, a region heavily associated with Sobek. Amenemhat and many of his dynastic contemporaries engaged in building projects to promote Sobek – projects that were often executed in the Faiyum. In this period, Sobek also underwent an important change: he was often fused with the falcon-headed god of divine kingship, Horus. This brought Sobek even closer with the kings of Egypt, thereby giving him a place of greater prominence in the Egyptian pantheon.^[6] The fusion added a finer level of complexity to the god's nature, as he was adopted into the divine triad of Horus and his two parents: Osiris and Isis.^[7]



This Late Period (c. 400 – 250 BCE) statue shows Sobek bearing the falcon head of Re-Harakhti, illustrating the fusion of Sobek and Re into Sobek-Re. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

Sobek first acquired a role as a solar deity through his connection to Horus, but this was further strengthened in later periods with the emergence of Sobek-Ra, a fusion of Sobek and Egypt's primary sun god, Ra. Sobek-Horus persisted as a figure in the New Kingdom (1550—1069 BCE), but it was not until the last dynasties of Egypt that Sobek-Ra gained prominence. This understanding of the god was maintained after the fall of Egypt's last native dynasty in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt (c. 332 BCE—390 CE). The prestige of both Sobek and Sobek-Ra endured in this time period and tributes to him attained greater prominence – both through the expansion of his dedicated cultic sites and a concerted scholarly effort to make him the subject of religious doctrine.^[8]



This relief from the Temple of Kom Ombo shows Sobek with typical attributes of kingship, including a was sceptre and royal kilt. The ankh in his hand represents his role as an Osirian healer and his crown is a solar crown associated with one of the many forms of Re.

Cult centers

The entire Faiyum region served — the “Land of the Lake” in Egyptian (specifically referring to Lake Moeris) — as a cultic center of Sobek. Most Faiyum localities developed their own localized versions of the god, but Sobek Shedety, the patron version of the Faiyum’s centrally located capital, Crocodilopolis (or Egyptian “Shedet”), was the most prominent. Extensive building programs honoring Sobek were realized in Shedet, as it was the capital of the entire Arsinoite nome and consequently the most important city in the Faiyum. It is thought that the effort to expand Sobek’s main temple was initially driven by Ptolemy II.^[9] Specialized priests in the main temple at Shedet functioned solely to serve Sobek, boasting titles like “prophet of the crocodile-gods” and “burier of the bodies of the crocodile-gods of the Land of the Lake.”^[10]

Outside of the Faiyum, Kom Ombo, located in southern Egypt, was the biggest cultic center of Sobek, particularly during the Ptolemaic and Roman, periods. The temple at this site was called the “Per-Sobek,” meaning the “house of Sobek.”^[11]

Character and surrounding mythologies

Sobek is, above all else, an aggressive and animalistic deity who lives up to the vicious reputation of his patron animal, the large and violent Nile crocodile. Some of his common epithets betray this nature succinctly, the most notable of which being: “he who loves robbery,” “he who eats while he also mates,” and “pointed of teeth.”^[12] However, he also displays grand benevolence in more than one celebrated myth. After his association with Horus and consequent adoption into the Osirian triad of Osiris, Isis, and Horus in the Middle Kingdom, Sobek became associated with Isis as a healer of the deceased Osiris (following his violent murder by Set in the central Osiris myth).^[13] In fact, though many scholars believe that the name of Sobek, *Sbk*, is derived from *s-bAk*, “to impregnate,” others postulate that it is a participial form of the verb *sbq*,^[14] an alternative writing of *sAq*, “to unite,” thereby meaning *Sbk* could roughly translate to “he who unites (the dismembered limbs of Osiris).”^[15]



This Roman period box shows a king making an offering to a solar form of Sobek. It is thought that this box could have been used in such offering rituals. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

It is from this association with healing that Sobek was considered a protective deity. His fierceness was able to ward off evil while simultaneously defending the innocent. He was thusly made a subject of personal piety and a common recipient of votive offerings, particularly in the later periods of ancient Egyptian history. It was not uncommon, particularly in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, for crocodiles to be preserved as mummies in order to present at Sobek’s cultic centers.^[16] Sobek was also offered mummified crocodile eggs, meant to emphasize the cyclical nature of his solar attributes as Sobek-Ra.^[17] Likewise, crocodiles were raised on religious grounds as living incarnations of Sobek. Upon their deaths, they were mummified in a grand ritual display as sacred, but earthly, manifestations of their patron god. This practice was executed specifically at the main temple of Crocodilopolis.^[18] It should also be mentioned that these mummified crocodiles have been found with baby crocodiles in their mouths and on their backs. The crocodile — one of the only non-mammals that diligently cares for its young — often transports its offspring in this manner. The practice of preserving this aspect of the animal’s behavior via mummification is likely intended to emphasize the protective and nurturing aspects of the fierce Sobek, as he protects the Egyptian people in

the same manner that the crocodile protects its young.^[19]

In Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, a “local monograph” called the *Book of the Faiyum* centered on Sobek with a considerable portion devoted to the journey made by Sobek-Ra each day with the movement of the sun through the sky. The text also focuses heavily on Sobek’s central role in creation as a manifestation of Ra, as he is said to have risen from the primal waters of Lake Moeris, not unlike the Ogdoad in the traditional creation myth of Hermopolis.^[20]

Many varied copies of the book exist and many scholars feel that it was produced in large quantities as a “best-seller” in antiquity. The integral relationship between the Faiyum and Sobek is highlighted via this text, and his far reaching influence is seen in localities that are outside of the Faiyum as well; a portion of the book is copied on the Upper Egyptian (meaning southern Egyptian) Temple of Kom Ombo.^[21]

Gallery



Sobek in his crocodile form, 12th Dynasty. Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst, Munich.



This New Kingdom statue shows pharaoh Amenhotep III with a solar form of Sobek, likely Sobek-Horus. Luxor Museum, Luxor.



Crocodiles of various ages mummified in honor of Sobek. The Crocodile Museum, Aswan.



Mummified crocodiles. The Crocodile Museum, Aswan.



A wall relief from Kom Ombo showing Sobek with solar attributes.



This dark blue glass head served as an inlay. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

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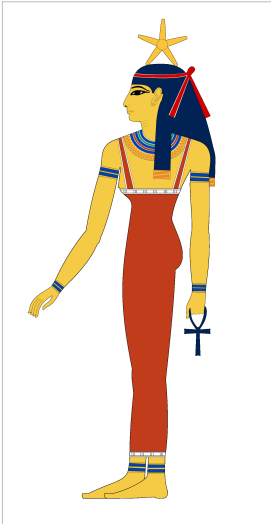
- [1] Zecchi, 3-4.
- [2] Bresciani, 199-200.
- [3] Allen, 60.
- [4] WB IV, 95.
- [5] Murray, 107
- [6] Zecchi, 37-52.
- [7] *Ibid.* , 3.
- [8] Zecchi, 153-154.
- [9] Zecchi, 153.
- [10] Bresciani, 203.
- [11] *Ibid.*
- [12] *Ibid.*, 199.
- [13] Zecchi, 3.
- [14] WB IV, 95.
- [15] Bresciani, 200.
- [16] Ikram, 219.
- [17] *Ibid.* , 225.
- [18] Bresciani, 202-203.
- [19] Ikram, 219.
- [20] O'Connor
- [21] Tait, 183-4.

External links

 Media related to Sobek at Wikimedia Commons

Sopdet

Sopdet



Sopdet in red dress, with star on the head

Goddess of star Sirius

Name in hieroglyphs	
Symbol	star
Consort	Sah (constellation of Orion)
Offspring	Sopdu

In Egyptian mythology, **Sopdet** was the deification of Sothis, a star considered by almost all Egyptologists to be Sirius. The name *Sopdet* means (*she who is*) *sharp* in Egyptian, a reference to the brightness of Sirius, which is the brightest star in the night sky. In art she is depicted as a woman with a five-pointed star upon her head.^[2]

Just after Sirius appears in the July sky, the Nile River begins its annual flood, and so the ancient Egyptians connected the two. Consequently Sopdet was identified as a goddess of the fertility of the soil, which was brought to it by the Nile's flooding. This significance led the Egyptians to base their calendar on the heliacal rising of Sirius.^[2]

Sopdet is the consort of Sah, the constellation of Orion, near which Sirius appears, and the god Sopdu was said to be their child. These relationships parallel those os the god Osiris and his family, and Sah was linked with Osiris, Sopdet with Isis, and Sopdu with Horus.^[2]

References

Sopdu

"Sopdu"
in hieroglyphs

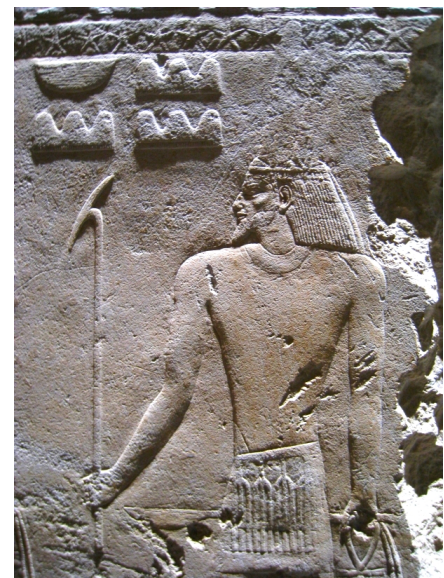
Sopdu (also rendered **Septu** or **Sopedu**) was a god of the sky and of eastern border regions in ancient Egyptian religion.^[1]

As a sky god, Sopdu was connected with the god Sah, the personification of the constellation Orion, and the goddess Sopdet, representing the star Sirius. According to the *Pyramid Texts*, Horus-Sopdu, a combination of Sopdu and the greater sky god Horus, is the offspring of Osiris-Sah and Isis-Sopdet.^[1]

As a god of the east, Sopdu was said to protect Egyptian outposts along the frontiers and to help the pharaoh control those regions' foreign inhabitants. He was referred to as *Lord of the East*, and had his greatest cult centre at the easternmost nome of Lower Egypt, which was named Per-Sopdu, meaning *place of Sopdu*. He also had shrines at Egyptian settlements in the Sinai Peninsula, such as the turquoise mines at Serabit el-Khadim.^[1]

Sopdu's name is composed of the hieroglyph for *sharp*, a pointed triangle, and the 3rd person plural suffix (a quail); thus a literal translation of his name is *sharp ones*.^[2] He was said, in the *Pyramid Texts*, to protect the teeth of the deceased pharaoh.^[1]

Sopdu was depicted as a falcon sitting on a religious standard, often with a two-feathered crown on his head and a flail over his shoulder. In his border-guarding role he was shown as a Near Eastern warrior, with a *shemset* girdle and an axe or spear.^[1]



Sopdu

References

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- [2] *Greek and Egyptian Mythologies* By Yves Bonnefoy and Wendy Doniger, p. 221. University of Chicago Press, 1992 ISBN 0-226-06454-9

Statue of Sekhmet

The **Statue of Sekhmet** /ˈsɛkˌmɛt/^[1] currently housed in the Gallery of Ancient Egypt at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) is a life-sized sculpture of one of the oldest known Egyptian deities.^[2] Her name is derived from the Egyptian word “sekhem” (which means “power” or “might”) and is often translated as the “Powerful One”.^[3] Depicted as a woman with the head of a lioness - sometimes with the addition of a sun disc and the uraeus serpent atop her head - Sekhmet is the ancient Egyptian goddess of war who was believed to be a protector of Ma’at (balance or justice) and of the Egyptian people.^[4] She was also associated with healing and medicine, and her priests were known for being trained doctors and surgeons of remarkable calibre.^{[3][5]}

The acquisition of this piece of Egyptian art was made possible by the support of the Louise Hawley Stone Charitable Trust, and is now one of the museum’s iconic objects.^[2] The statue dates back to the 18th dynasty (New Kingdom) circa 1360 BCE, during the reign of King Tutankhamun’s grandfather, Amenhotep III, and is thought to have originated from the Temple of Mut at Karnak, Egypt.^[2] The Temple of Mut is perhaps best known for its many statues of Sekhmet, which number in the hundreds.^[6] Sekhmet is usually depicted with a lotus flower (symbolising Upper Egypt, the sun, creation, and rebirth) in her right hand, and an ankh (also known as the key of life, which symbolises eternal life) in her left.^{[4][7]} The statue is made of carved and polished granite and depicts the goddess in a seated position holding only an ankh in her left hand, and stands at a height of about 6 feet (184 cm).^[2]

The Statue of Sekhmet can be found on Level 3 of the ROM in the Galleries of Africa: Egypt, where close to 2,000 objects from the ROM’s Egyptian collection are showcased. The ROM’s Egyptian collection comprises approximately 25,000 artefacts.^[8]



The Statue of Sekhmet at the Royal Ontario Museum in Galleries of Africa: Egypt.

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External links

- Royal Ontario Museum official website (<http://www.rom.on.ca/en>)

Ta-Bitjet

Ta-Bitjet is an ancient goddess of Egyptian mythology. She is identified as the consort of Horus. Ta-Bitjet is a scorpion goddess and the blood that flowed from when Horus ruptured her hymen can serve as a panacea for all poisons.

Tatenen

Tatenen (also **Ta-tenen**, **Tatjenen**, **Tathenen**, **Tanen**, **Tenen**, **Tanenu**, and **Tanuu**) was the god of the primordial mound in Egyptian Mythology. His name means *risen land*^[1] or *exalted earth*,^[2] as well as referring to the silt of the Nile. As a primeval chthonic deity,^[3] Tatenen was identified with creation. He was an androgynous protector of nature from the Memphis area, then known as "Men-nefer".

Tatenen represented the Earth and was born in the moment it rose from the watery chaos,^[1] analogous to the primeval mound of the benben and mastaba and the later pyramids. He was seen as the source of "food and viands, divine offers, all good things",^[4] as his realms were the deep regions beneath the earth "from which everything emerges", specifically including plants, vegetables, and minerals.^[3] His father was the creator god Khnum, who made him on his potter's wheel of Nile mud at the moment of creation of Earth.^[5] This fortuity granted him the titles of both "creator and mother who gave birth to all gods" and "father of all the gods".^{[1][6]} He also personified Egypt (due to his associations with rebirth and the Nile) and was an aspect of the earth-god Geb, as a source of artistic inspiration,^[7] as well as assisting the dead in their journey to the afterlife.^[8]

He is first attested in the Coffin Texts, where his name appears as Tanenu or Tanuu, 'the inert land', a name which characterizes him as a god of the primeval condition of the earth. Middle Kingdom texts provide the first examples of the form Tatenen.^[3]

With a staff Tatenen repelled the evil serpent Apep from the Primeval Mound. He also had a magical mace dedicated to the falcon, venerated as "The Great White of the Earth Creator".^[9] In one interpretation, Tatenen brought the Djed-pillars of stability to the country,^[9] although this is more commonly attributed to Ptah.

Ptah-Tatenen

Both Tatenen and Ptah were Memphite gods. Tatenen was the more ancient god, combined in the Old Kingdom with Ptah as Ptah-Tatenen, in their capacity as creator gods.^[2] By the Nineteenth dynasty Ptah-Tatenen is his sole form, and he is worshiped as royal creator god. Ptah-Tatenen can be seen as father of the Ogdoad of Hermopolis, the eight gods who themselves embody the primeval elements from before creation.^[3]

Portrayal

Tatenen's ambiguous portrayal is a result of the ancient nature of the period he was worshipped in, as well as the subsequent confusion when he was merged with Ptah. He was always in human form, usually seated with a pharonic beard, wearing either an Atef-crown (as Ptah-Sokar) or, more commonly, a pair of ram's horns surmounted by a sun disk and two tall feathers.^[3] As Tanenu or Tanuu, obviously a chthonic deity, he carried two snakes on his head.^[3] He was both feminine and masculine, a consequence of his status as a primeval, creator deity.^[1] Some depictions show Tatenen with a green complexion (face and arms), as he had connections to fertility and a chthonic association

with plants.^[2]

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Taweret

Taweret



The river goddess Taweret, portrayed as a bipedal hippopotamus with limbs like those of a feline.

Goddess of childbirth	
Symbol	the sa, ivory dagger, Hippopotamus
Consort	Set

In Egyptian mythology, **Taweret** (also spelled **Taurt**, **Tuat**, **Tauris**, **Tuart**, **Ta-weret**, **Tawaret**, and **Taueret**, and in Greek, **Θουέρις** "**Thouéris**" and **Toeris**) is the ancient Egyptian goddess of childbirth and fertility. The name "Taweret" means, "she who is great" or simply, "great one".^[1] When paired with another deity, she became the wife of Apep, the devouring serpent god much feared by the Egyptians.

However, the Egyptians essentially treated Taweret as a benevolent figure and this deity is attested as early as the Old Kingdom period "when she took three principal names: Opet or *Ipy* ('harim' or favoured place), Taweret ('the great goddess') and Reret ('the sow'). She has been linked with the fierce, devouring goddess Ammit"^[2] While there is a temple of Opet at Karnak, dating to the Late Period and Ptolemaic era, "it was the cult of Taweret that gained particular importance over time."^[2]



A faience figurine of Taweret following the figure of Wadjet, the cobra

Early beliefs



This Taweret amulet made from green serpentinite has a lion head instead of the usual head of a hippo, showing an alternate form of the goddess. Amulets like these were worn by mothers and expectant mothers to protect their children. ^[3] The Walters Art Museum.

Taweret was known as *mistress of the horizon*. Like the dwarf god Bes, Taweret:

"appears to have had no cult temples of her own, although a few statues have survived, and she was sometimes portrayed in temple reliefs. The Egyptian system of constellations connected the hippopotamus with the northern sky, and it was in this role as Nebet-akhmet ('mistress of the horizon') that Taweret was depicted on the ceiling of the tomb of Seti I...in the Valley of the Kings (KV15)."^[2]

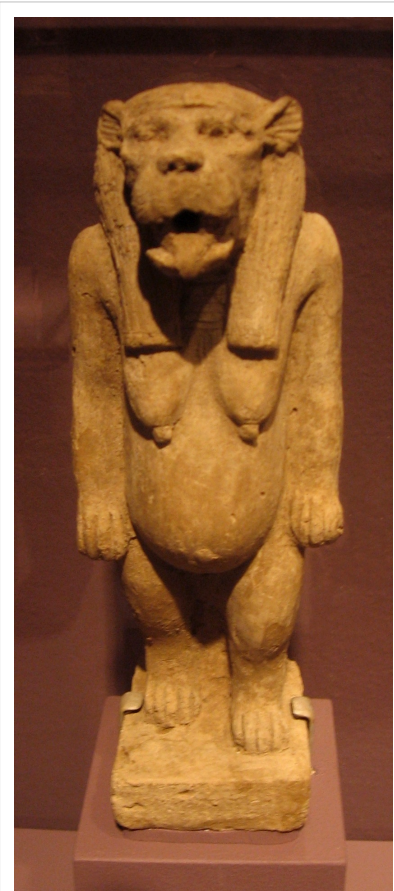
She was "usually portrayed with the arms and legs of a lion and the back and tail of a crocodile (or even a complete crocodile perched on her back), while her pendulous breasts and full belly conveyed the idea of pregnancy."^[2] On occasion, later, rather than having a crocodile back, she was seen as having a separate, small crocodile resting on her back, which was thus interpreted as Sobek, the crocodile-god, and said to be her consort.

Later beliefs

Early during the Old Kingdom, the Egyptians saw female hippopotamuses as less aggressive than the males, and began to view their aggression as only protecting their young--not territorial, as was male aggression. Consequently, Taweret became seen, very early in Egyptian history, as a deity of protection in pregnancy and childbirth. Pregnant women wore amulets with her name or likeness to protect their pregnancies. Because of her protective powers during childbirth, "the image of the hippopotamus-goddess was considered a suitable motif for the decoration of beds and headrests."^[2]

In most subsequent depictions, Taweret was depicted with features of a visibly pregnant woman. In a composite addition to the animal-compound she was also seen with pendulous breasts, a full pregnant abdomen, and long, straight human hair on her head. Faience vases in the shape of the goddess "provided with a small pouring hole at the nipple, were sometimes used to serve milk, presumably in an attempt to invoke extra divine potency into the liquid."^[4]

As a protector, she often was shown with one arm resting on the was symbol, which symbolized protection, and on occasion she carried an ankh, the symbol of life, or a knife, which would be used to threaten evil spirits. As the hippopotamus was associated with the Nile, these more positive ideas of Taweret allowed her to be seen as a goddess of the annual flooding of the Nile and the bountiful harvest that it brought. Ultimately, although only a household deity, since she was still considered the consort of Apep, Taweret was seen as one who protected against evil by restraining it.



Clay statue of the goddess found in a foundation deposit under the enclosure wall of the pyramid of King Anlamani (623-595 BCE), in Nubia.

In popular culture

- In the Rick Riordan book series *The Kane Chronicles*, Taweret appears as a permanently pregnant, bipedal hippo who is in charge of the House of Rest, a nursing home where forgotten gods and goddesses live out their final years. She is portrayed as being in love with the dwarf god Bes.
- She appears as a large monument on the Island in the hit ABC series, *Lost*. She is depicted as having four toes and the meaning behind her appearance on the show was never directly explained.

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[1] <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/taweret.htm>

[2] Ian Shaw & Paul Nicholson, *The Dictionary of Ancient Egypt*, British Museum, Henry N. Abrams Ince. New York, 1995. p.283

[4] Shaw & Nicholson, pp.283-84

External links

- Hatshepsut: from Queen to Pharaoh (<http://libmma.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15324coll10/id/82622/rec/1>), an exhibition catalog from The Metropolitan Museum of Art (fully available online as PDF), which contains material on Taweret (see index)

 Media related to Taweret at Wikimedia Commons

Tefnut

Tefnut



The goddess Tefnut with the head of a lioness sitting on her throne.

Goddess of moisture	
Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Heliopolis, Leontopolis
Symbol	Lioness
Consort	Shu
Parents	Ra-Atum and Iusaaset
Siblings	Shu

Tefnut (/ˈtɛfˌnʊt/; Egyptian: *Tefenet*) is a goddess of moisture, moist air, dew and rain in Ancient Egyptian religion.^[1] She is the sister and consort of the air god Shu and the mother of Geb and Nut.

Etymology

Literally translating as "That Water",^[1] the name Tefnut has been linked to the verb 'tfn' meaning 'to spit'^[2] and versions of the creation myth say that Atum (or Ra) spat her out and her name was written as a mouth spitting in late texts.^[3]

Unlike most Egyptian deities, including her brother, Tefnut has no single ideograph or symbol. Her name in hieroglyphics consists of four single phonogram symbols t-f-n-t. Although the n phonogram is a representation of waves on the surface of water, it was never used as an ideogram or determinative for the word water (*mw*), or for anything associated with water.^[4]

Mythological origins

Tefnut is a daughter of the solar god Atum-Ra. Married to her brother, Shu, she is mother of Nut, the sky and Geb, the earth. Tefnut's grandchildren were Osiris, Isis, Set and Nephthys. She was also a great grandmother of Horus. Alongside her father, brother, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild, she is a member of the Ennead of Heliopolis.

There are a number of variants to the myth of the creation of Tefnut and her twin brother Shu. In all versions, Tefnut is the product of parthenogenesis, and all involve some variety of bodily fluid.

In the Heliopolitan creation myth, the solar god Atum masturbates to produce Tefnut and Shu.^[1]

Atum was creative in that he proceeded to masturbate himself in Heliopolis. He took his penis in his hand so that he might obtain the pleasure of orgasm thereby. And brother and sister were born - that is Shu and Tefnut. Pyramid Text 527^[1]

In some versions of this myth, Atum also swallows his semen, and spits it out to form the twins, or else the spitting of his saliva forms the act of procreation. Both of these versions contain a play on words, the *tef* sound which forms the first syllable of the name Tefnut also constitutes a word meaning "to spit" or "to expectorate".^[1]

The Coffin Texts contain references to Shu being sneezed out by Atum from his nose, and Tefnut being spat out like saliva. The Bremner-Rind Papyrus and the Memphite Theology describe Atum masturbating into his mouth, before spitting out his semen to form the twins.^[1]

Iconography

Tefnut is a leonine deity, and appears as human with a lioness head when depicted as part of the Great Ennead of Heliopolis. The other frequent depiction is as a lioness, but Tefnut can also be depicted as fully human. In her fully or semi anthropomorphic form, she is depicted wearing a wig, topped either with a uraeus serpent, or a uraeus and solar disk, and she is sometimes depicted as a lion headed serpent. Her face is sometimes used in a double headed form with that of her brother Shu on collar counterpoises.^[1]

When depicted as a woman with a lion's head, she can be distinguished from Sekhmet as Sekhmet's ears are rounded while Tefnut's are pointed.^[5]

Cult centres

Heliopolis and Leontopolis (modern Tel el-Muqdam) were the primary cult centres. At Heliopolis, Tefnut was one of the members of that city's great Ennead,^[1] and is referred to in relation to the purification of the *wabet* (priest) as part of the temple rite. Here she had a sanctuary called the Lower Menset.^[1]

*"I have ascended to you
with the Great One behind me
and <my> purity before me:
I have passed by Tefnut,
even while Tefnut was purifying me,
and indeed I am a priest, the son of a priest in this temple."* Papyrus Berlin 3055^[6]

At Karnak, Tefnut formed part of the Great Ennead and was invoked in prayers for the health and wellbeing of the Pharaoh.^[1]

She was worshipped with Shu as a pair of lions in Leontopolis in the Delta.^[7]

Mythology

Tefnut was connected with other leonine goddesses as the Eye of Ra.^[8] As a lioness she could display a wrathful aspect and is said to escape to Nubia in a rage from where she is brought back by Thoth.^[3] In the earlier Pyramid Texts she is said to produce pure waters from her vagina.^[9]

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- [2] <http://henadology.wordpress.com/theology/netjeru/tefnut>
- [3] The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt, Wilkinson, page. 183 ISBN 0-500-05120-8
- [5] Gallery of Feline Deities in Ancient Egypt (<http://www.philae.nu/akhet/Felines.html>)
- [7] The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses, George Hart ISBN 0-415-34495-6,
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Tenenet

Tenenet, alts. **Tjenenet**, **Zenenet**, **Tanenet**, **Tenenit**, Manuel de Codage transliteration *Tnn.t*, was an ancient Egyptian goddess of childbirth and beer. She is mentioned in texts dating from the Ptolemaic period as well as in the Book of the Dead.

Associations with childbirth and beer

Tenenet was associated with childbirth and was invoked as the protector of the uterus for pregnant women.^[1] She was depicted wearing a cow uterus on her head, as was the goddess Meskhenet, who is also associated with childbirth.

Because women were customarily tasked with bread-making, the making of beer was also considered to be a woman's task. The making of beer was based on specially made loaves of bread baked with barley and then fermented in jars.^[2] In this way, Tenenet was also associated with beer.

Worship

Her cult centre was at Hermonthis. She was a consort of Monthu. She was later merged with Rat-Tauī,^[3] Isis and Anit.^[4] Her shape was human and on her head she wore a symbol similar to Meskhenet's.

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- [1] Christian Jacq, *Les Egyptiennes*, Perrin, 1996, ISBN 2-262-01075-7
- [2] Norman Bancroft Hunt, *Living in Ancient Egypt*, Thalamus Publishing, 2009, ISBN 978-0-8160-6338-3
- [3] Manfred Lurker, *The Routledge Dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Devils and Demons*, Routledge 2004, ISBN 0-415-34018-7, p.208
- [4] W. Max Muller, *Egyptian Mythology*, Kessinger Publishing 2004, ISBN 0-7661-8601-6, p.150

External links

- Beer in ancient Egypt (http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/egypt_alcohol.html)

Theban Triad

The **Theban Triad** are three Egyptian gods that were the most popular in the area of Thebes, in Egypt. The group consisted of Amun, his consort Mut and their son Khonsu.

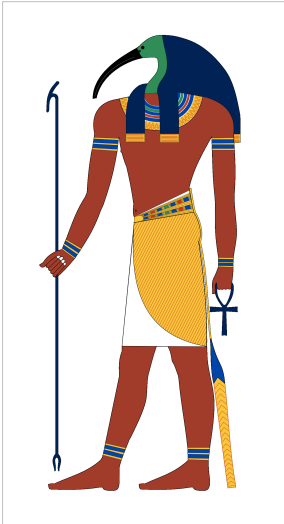
The eighteenth and twenty fifth dynasties of the New Kingdom favored the triad. These gods were the primary objects of worship of the massive temple complex at Karnak, although temples and shrines exist throughout Egypt, such as one at Deir el-Hagar close to the Dakhla Oasis.^[1] Amenhotep I, the Pharaoh who built Karnak, was often depicted among these gods.

References

Thoth

For other meanings of "Thoth", or of "Djehuti" and similar, see Thoth (disambiguation).

Thoth



Thoth, in one of his forms as an ibis-headed man

God of Knowledge, Hieroglyphs and Wisdom	
Major cult center	Hermopolis
Symbol	Moon disk, papyrus scroll
Consort	Seshat, Ma'at, Bastet or Hathor
Parents	None (self-created); alternatively Ra or Horus and Hathor,

Thoth (/ˈθoʊθ/ or /ˈtoʊt/; from Greek Θῶθ *thóth*, from Egyptian *ḏḥwtj*, perhaps pronounced */tʃiˈħautiː/) was considered one of the more important deities of the Egyptian pantheon. In art, he was often depicted as a man with the head of an ibis or a baboon, animals sacred to him. As in the main picture, Thoth is almost always shown holding a Was (a wand or rod symbolizing power) in one hand and an Ankh (the key of the Nile symbolizing life) in the other hand. His feminine counterpart was Seshat, and his wife was Ma'at.^[1]

Thoth's chief temple was located in the city of Khmun,^[2] later called Hermopolis Magna during the Greco-Roman era^[3] (in reference to him through the Greeks' interpretation that he was the same as their god Hermes) and ⲩⲙⲟⲩⲛⲉⲓⲛ *shmounein* in the Coptic rendering. In that city, he led the Ogdoad pantheon of eight principal deities. He also had numerous shrines within the cities of Abydos, Hesert, Urit, Per-Ab, Rekhui, Ta-ur, Sep, Hat, Pselket, Talmsis, Antcha-Mutet, Bah, Amen-heri-ab, and Ta-kens.^[4]

Thoth played many vital and prominent roles in Egyptian mythology, such as maintaining the universe, and being one of the two deities (the other being Ma'at) who stood on either side of Ra's boat.^[5] In the later history of ancient Egypt, Thoth became heavily associated with the arbitration of godly disputes,^[6] the arts of magic, the system of writing, the development of science,^[7] and the judgment of the dead.^[8]

Name

Etymology

, or
Common names for Thoth ^[9] in hieroglyphs

The Egyptian pronunciation of *dḥwty* is not fully known, but may be reconstructed as **dīḥautī*, based on the Ancient Greek borrowing *Θῶθ* *Thōth* or *Theut* and the fact that it evolved into Sahidic Coptic variously as *Thoout*, *Thōth*, *Thoot*, *Thaut* as well as Bohairic Coptic *Thōout*. The final *-y* may even have been pronounced as a consonant, not a vowel.^[10] However, many write "Djehuty", inserting the letter 'e' automatically between consonants in Egyptian words, and writing 'w' as 'u', as a convention of convenience for English speakers, not the transliteration employed by Egyptologists.^[11]

According to Theodor Hopfner,^[12] Thoth's Egyptian name written as *dḥwty* originated from *dḥw*, claimed to be the oldest known name for the Ibis although normally written as *hbj*. The addition of *-ty* denotes that he possessed the attributes of the Ibis.^[13] Hence his name means "He who is like the Ibis".

Further names and spellings

Djehuty is sometimes alternatively rendered as **Jehuti**, **Tahuti**, **Tehuti**, **Zehuti**, **Techu**, or **Tetu**. *Thoth* (also **Thot** or **Thout**) is the Greek version derived from the letters *dḥwty*. Not counting differences in spelling, Thoth had many names and titles, like other goddesses and gods. (Similarly, each Pharaoh, considered a god himself, had five different names used in public.^[14]) Among the names used are *A*, *Sheps*, *Lord of Khemennu*, *Asten*, *Khenti*, *Mehi*, *Hab*, and *A'an*.^[15]

In addition, Thoth was also known by specific aspects of himself, for instance the moon god Iah-Djehuty, representing the Moon for the entire month.^[16] The Greeks related Thoth to their god Hermes due to his similar attributes and functions.^[17] One of Thoth's titles, "Three times great, great" (see Titles) was translated to the Greek *τρισμεγιστος* (Trismegistos) making Hermes Trismegistus.^[18]

Depictions

Thoth has been depicted in many ways depending on the era and on the aspect the artist wished to convey. Usually, he is depicted in his human form with the head of an ibis.^[19] In this form, he can be represented as the reckoner of times and seasons by a headdress of the lunar disk sitting on top of a crescent moon resting on his head. When depicted as a form of Shu or Ankher, he was depicted to be wearing the respective god's headdress. Sometimes he was also seen in art to be wearing the Atef crown or the United Crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt.^[13] When not depicted in this common form, he sometimes takes the form of the ibis directly.^[19]

He also appears as a dog faced baboon or a man with the head of a baboon when he is A'an, the god of equilibrium.^[20] In the form of A'ah-Djehuty he took a more human-looking form.^[21] These forms are all symbolic and are metaphors for Thoth's attributes. The Egyptians did not believe these gods actually looked like humans with animal heads.^[22] For example, Ma'at is often depicted with an ostrich feather, "the feather of truth," on her head,^[23] or with a feather for a head.^[24]



Depiction of Thoth as a baboon (c. 1400 BC), in the British Museum

Attributes

Thoth's roles in Egyptian mythology were many. He served as a mediating power, especially between good and evil, making sure neither had a decisive victory over the other.^[25] He also served as scribe of the gods,^[26] credited with the invention of writing and alphabets (i.e. hieroglyphs) themselves.^[27] In the underworld, Duat, he appeared as an ape, A'an, the god of equilibrium, who reported when the scales weighing the deceased's heart against the feather, representing the principle of Ma'at, was exactly even.^[28]

The ancient Egyptians regarded Thoth as One, self-begotten, and self-produced.^[19] He was the master of both physical and moral (i.e. Divine) law,^[19] making proper use of Ma'at.^[29] He is credited with making the calculations for the establishment of the heavens, stars, Earth,^[30] and everything in them.^[29] Compare this to how his feminine counterpart, Ma'at was the force which maintained the Universe.^[31] He is said to direct the motions of the heavenly bodies. Without his words, the Egyptians believed, the gods would not exist.^[26] His power was unlimited in the Underworld and rivaled that of Ra and Osiris.^[19]

The Egyptians credited him as the author of all works of science, religion, philosophy, and magic.^[32] The Greeks further declared him the inventor of astronomy, astrology, the science of numbers, mathematics, geometry, land surveying, medicine, botany, theology, civilized government, the alphabet, reading, writing, and oratory. They further claimed he was the true author of every work of every branch of knowledge, human and divine.^[27]

Mythology

Thoth has played a prominent role in many of the Egyptian myths. Displaying his role as arbitrator, he had overseen the three epic battles between good and evil. All three battles are fundamentally the same and belong to different periods. The first battle took place between Ra and Apophis, the second between Heru-Bekhutet and Set, and the third between Horus, the son of Osiris, and Set. In each instance, the former god represented order while the latter represented chaos. If one god was seriously injured, Thoth would heal them to prevent either from overtaking the other.

Thoth was also prominent in the Osiris myth, being of great aid to Isis. After Isis gathered together the pieces of Osiris' dismembered body, he gave her the words to resurrect him so she could be impregnated and bring forth Horus. When Horus was slain, Thoth gave the magic to resurrect him as well. Thoth was the god who always speaks the words that fulfill the wishes of Ra.

This mythology also credits him with the creation of the 365 day calendar. Originally, according to the myth, the year was only 360 days long and Nut was sterile during these days, unable to bear children. Thoth gambled with the Moon for 1/72nd of its light ($360/72 = 5$), or 5 days, and won. During these 5 days, Nut gave birth to Kheru-ur (Horus the Elder, Face of Heaven), Osiris, Set, Isis, and Nephtys.



Lee Lawrie, *Thoth* (1939). Library of Congress John Adams Building, Washington, D.C.

History

He was originally the deification of the Moon in the Ogdoad belief system. Initially, in that system, the Moon had been seen to be the eye of Horus, the sky god, which had been semi-blinded (thus darker) in a fight against Set, the other eye being the Sun. However, over time it began to be considered separately, becoming a lunar deity in its own right, and was said to have been another son of Ra. As the crescent moon strongly resembles the curved beak of the ibis, this separate deity was named Djehuty (i.e. Thoth), meaning *ibis*.

The Moon not only provides light at night, allowing the time to still be measured without the sun, but its phases and prominence gave it a significant importance in early astrology/astronomy. The cycles of the Moon also organized much of Egyptian society's civil, and religious, rituals, and events. Consequently, Thoth gradually became seen as a god of wisdom, magic, and the measurement, and regulation, of events, and of time. He was thus said to be the secretary and counselor of Ra, and with Ma'at (truth/order) stood next to Ra on the nightly voyage across the sky, Ra being a sun god.

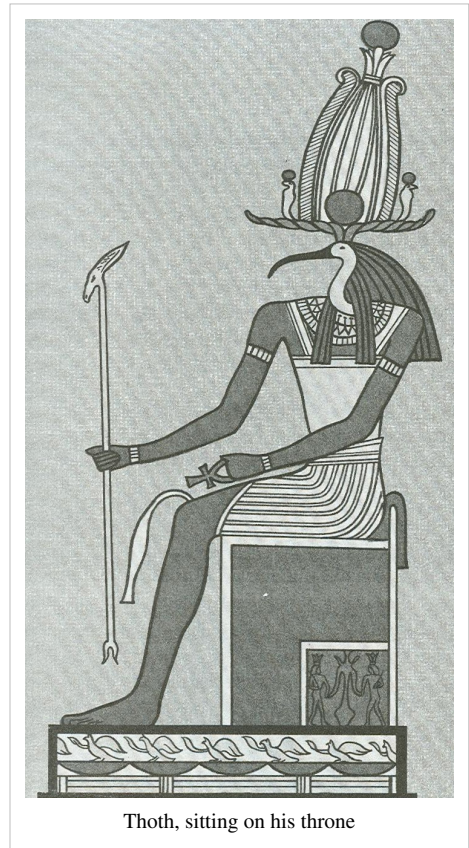
Thoth became credited by the ancient Egyptians as the inventor of writing, and was also considered to have been the scribe of the underworld, and the Moon became occasionally considered a separate entity, now that Thoth had less association with it, and more with wisdom. For this reason Thoth was universally worshipped by ancient Egyptian Scribes. Many scribes had a painting or a picture of Thoth in their "office". Likewise, one of the symbols for scribes was that of the ibis.

In art, Thoth was usually depicted with the head of an ibis, deriving from his name, and the curve of the ibis' beak, which resembles the crescent moon. Sometimes, he was depicted as a baboon holding up a crescent moon, as the baboon was seen as a nocturnal, and intelligent, creature. The association with baboons led to him occasionally being said to have as a consort Astennu, one of the (male) baboons at the place of judgment in the underworld, and on other occasions, Astennu was said to be Thoth himself.

During the late period of Egyptian history a cult of Thoth gained prominence, due to its main centre, Khnum (Hermopolis Magna), also becoming the capital, and millions of dead ibis were mummified and buried in his honour. The rise of his cult also led to his cult seeking to adjust mythology to give Thoth a greater role.

Thoth was inserted in many tales as the wise counsel and persuader, and his association with learning, and measurement, led him to be connected with Seshat, the earlier deification of wisdom, who was said to be his daughter, or variably his wife. Thoth's qualities also led to him being identified by the Greeks with their closest matching god Hermes, with whom Thoth was eventually combined, as Hermes Trismegistus, also leading to the Greeks naming Thoth's cult centre as Hermopolis, meaning *city of Hermes*.

It is also considered that Thoth was the scribe of the gods rather than a messenger. Anubis (or Hermanubis) was viewed as the messenger of the gods, as he travelled in and out of the Underworld and presented himself to the gods and to humans. It is more widely accepted that Thoth was a record keeper, not a divine messenger. In the Papyrus of Ani copy of the Egyptian Book of the Dead the scribe proclaims "I am thy writing palette, O Thoth, and I have brought unto thee thine ink-jar. I am not of those who work iniquity in their secret places; let not evil happen unto me."^[33] Chapter XXXb (Budge) of the Book of the Dead is by the oldest tradition said to be the work of Thoth himself.^[34]



Thoth, sitting on his throne

There was also an Egyptian pharaoh of the Sixteenth dynasty of Egypt named Djehuty (Thoth) after him, and who reigned for three years.

Titles

Thoth, like many Egyptian gods and nobility, held many titles. Among these were "Scribe of Ma'at in the Company of the Gods," "Lord of Ma'at," "Lord of Divine Words," "Judge of the Two Combatant Gods,"^[30] "Judge of the Rekhekhui, the pacifier of the Gods, who Dwelleth in Unnu, the Great God in the Temple of Abtiti,"^[25] "Twice Great," "Thrice Great,"^[19] ", "Three Times Great,"^[35] and also "The Timeless."

Notes

- [1] Thutmose III: A New Biography By Eric H Cline, David O'Connor University of Michigan Press (January 5, 2006)p. 127
- [2] *National Geographic Society: Egypt's Nile Valley Supplement Map*. (Produced by the Cartographic Division)
- [3] *National Geographic Society: Egypt's Nile Valley Supplement Map: Western Desert portion*. (Produced by the Cartographic Division)
- [4] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Thoth was said to be born from the skull of set also said to be born from the heart of Ra.p. 401)
- [5] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 400)
- [6] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 405)
- [7] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 414)
- [8] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* p. 403)
- [9] Hieroglyphs verified, in part, in (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 402) and (Collier and Manley p. 161)
- [10] Information taken from phonetic symbols for Djehuty, and explanations on how to pronounce based upon modern rules, revealed in (Collier and Manley pp. 2–4, 161)
- [11] (Collier and Manley p. 4)
- [12] Hopfner, Theodor, b. 1886. *Der tierkult der alten Agypter nach den griechisch-romischen berichten und den wichtigeren denkmälern*. Wien, In kommission bei A. Holder, 1913. Call# = 060 VPD v.57
- [13] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 402)
- [14] (Collier and Manley p. 20)
- [15] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 pp. 402–3)
- [16] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 pp. 412–3)
- [17] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* p. 402)
- [18] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 415)
- [19] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 401)
- [20] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 403)
- [21] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 plate between pp. 408–9)
- [22] Allen, James P. (2000). *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*, p. 44.
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- [24] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 416)
- [25] (Budge *Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 405)
- [26] (Budge *Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 408)
- [27] (Budge *Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 414)
- [28] (Budge *Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 403)
- [29] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 407)
- [30] (Budge *Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 401)
- [31] (Budge *Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 pp. 407–8)
- [32] (Hall *The Hermetic Marriage* p. 224)
- [33] *The Book of the Dead*", E.A Wallis Budge, orig pub 1895, Gramercy books 1999, p562, ISBN 0-517-12283-9
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-

Tutu (Egyptian god)

Tutu



A relief depicting Tutu. He wears the headdress of a king, has a human face, the body of a lion, the wings of a bird, the tail of a cobra and he stomps on Sekhmet's arrows.

God of protection of tombs, later guarded the sleeping from danger or bad dreams Master of demons.

Major cult center	Kellis
Symbol	Lion, Sphinx, weaponry
Parents	Neith

Tutu (or **Tithoes** in Greek) was an Egyptian god worshipped by ordinary people all over Egypt during the late period.^[1] The only known temple dedicated to Tutu is located in ancient Kellis, but reliefs depicting Tutu are seen in other temples, such as the Temple of Kalabsha. Tutu's title at the Shenhur temple was "Who comes to the one calling him". Other titles of Tutu are "Son of Neith," "the Lion," "Great of Strength", and "Master of the demons of Sekhmet and the wandering demons of Bastet".

His iconography is hybrid consisting of the body of a striding, winged lion, the head of a human, other heads of hawks and crocodiles projecting from the body, and the tail of a serpent. Tutu was son of Neith, who was considered as a "dangerous goddess". Other goddesses in the same aspect were named as Mut, Sekhmet, Nekhbet and Bastet. This meant that Tutu is placed in a position of power over demons. It was his role to slay demons sent out by "dangerous goddesses"; other sons of these goddesses performed the same function. These were Mahes, Khonsu and Nefertem. Originally the protector of tombs, Tutu later guarded the sleeping from danger or bad dreams. Tutu was also regarded for ordinary people to worship, offering and rituals were made on portable altars. Offerings included goose, and bread, and rituals were for protection from demons and bad dreams. Tutu was stated to have given protection from demons, giving longer life and protecting people from the Netherworld.

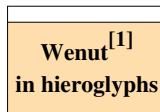
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Unut

For the town in Armenia, see Hunut.



Unut, alt. **Wenut** or **Wenet**, is a prehistoric Egyptian snake goddess.

Originally, she had the form of a snake and was called "The swift one". She came from the fifteenth Upper Egyptian province and was worshipped with Thoth at its capital Hermopolis (in Egyptian: *Wenu*). Later she was depicted with a woman's body and a hare's head.^[2] She was taken into the cult of Horus and later of Ra.

Her name can be represented with five different hieroglyphs, but she appears rarely in literature and inscriptions. An exceptional sculpture of her has been found by American archaeologists and is probably the only one of its kind found so far. Her name was taken into the highest royal position just once in the long Egyptian history. The only king bearing her name was Unas. Her male companion is Wenenu, who was sometimes regarded as a form of Osiris or Ra.^[3]

References

[1] Wörterbuch, I., p.317

[2] Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, Cornell University Press 1996, ISBN 0-8014-8384-0, p. 82

[3] Richard Wilkinson: *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. London, Thames and Hudson, 2003. ISBN 978-0500051207 p. 199

Wadj-wer

Wadj-wer is an Egyptian fertility god whose name means the "Great Green". Sometimes depicted in androgynous form, he is a personification of the Mediterranean Sea or of the major lakes of the Nile delta. He is depicted as carrying the ankh and a loaf. Wadj-wer is often depicted as being pregnant and is associated with the richness of the waters of the Nile delta.

References

- Encyclopedia of Gods, Kyle Cathie Limited, 2002

Wadjet

wꜥdyt
in hieroglyphs

cobra+Sun
in hieroglyphs

ꜥt "cobra"
in hieroglyphs

Wadjet (/ˈwɑːdˌdʒɛt/ or /ˈwædˌdʒɛt/; Egyptian wꜥdyt, "green one"),^[1] known to the Greek world as **Uto** /ˈjuːtoʊ/ or **Buto** /ˈbjuːtoʊ/ among other names, was originally the ancient local goddess of the city of Dep (Buto),^[2] which became part of the city that the Egyptians named **Per-Wadjet**, *House of Wadjet*, and the Greeks called Buto (Desouk now),^[3] a city that was an important site in the Predynastic era of Ancient Egypt and the cultural developments of the Paleolithic. She was said to be the patron and protector of Lower Egypt and upon unification with Upper Egypt, the joint protector and patron of all of Egypt with the "goddess" of Upper Egypt. The image of Wadjet with the sun disk is called the uraeus, and it was the emblem on the crown of the rulers of Lower Egypt. She was also the protector of kings and of women in childbirth.

As the patron goddess, she was associated with the land and depicted as a snake-headed woman or a snake—usually an Egyptian cobra, a venomous snake common to the region; sometimes she was depicted as a woman with two snake heads and, at other times, a snake with a woman's head. Her oracle was in the renowned temple in Per-Wadjet that was dedicated to her worship and gave the city its name. This oracle may have been the source for the oracular tradition that spread to Greece from Egypt.^[4]

The *Going Forth of Wadjet* was celebrated on December 25 with chants and songs. An annual festival held in the city celebrated Wadjet on April 21. Other important dates for special worship of her were June 21, the Summer Solstice, and March 14. She also was assigned the fifth hour of the fifth day of the moon.

Wadjet was closely associated in the Egyptian pantheon with Bast, the fierce goddess depicted as a lioness warrior and protector, as the sun goddess whose eye later became the eye of Horus, the eye of Ra, and as the Lady of Flame. The hieroglyph for her eye is shown below; sometimes two are shown in the sky of religious images. Per-Wadjet also contained a sanctuary of Horus, the child of the sun deity who would be interpreted to represent the pharaoh. Much later, Wadjet became associated with Isis as well as with many other deities.

In the relief shown to the right, which is on the wall of the Hatshepsut Temple at Luxor, there are two images of Wadjet: one of her as the uraeus sun disk with her head through an ankh and another where she precedes a Horus hawk wearing the double crown of united Egypt, representing the pharaoh whom she protects.



Two images of Wadjet appear on this carved wall in the Hatshepsut Temple at Luxor

Etymology

The name Wadjet^[5] is derived from the term for the symbol of her domain, Lower Egypt, the *papyrus*.^[6]

Her name means "papyrus-colored one",^{[7][8]} as *wadj* is the ancient Egyptian word for the color green (in reference to the color of the papyrus plant) and the *et* is an indication of her gender. Its hieroglyphs differ from those of the Green Crown (Red Crown) of Lower Egypt only by the determinative, which in the case of the crown was a picture of the Green Crown^[9] and, in the case of the goddess, a rearing cobra.

Protector of country, pharaohs, and other deities

**Uraeus –
Uraeus on
Basket
Ntr + Cobra
in hieroglyphs**

**Wedjat - Eye of
Horus
in hieroglyphs**

Eventually, Wadjet was claimed as the patron goddess and protector of the whole of Lower Egypt and became associated with Nekhbet, depicted as a white vulture, who held unified Egypt. After the unification the image of Nekhbet joined Wadjet on the crown, thereafter shown as part of the uraeus.

The ancient Egyptian word *Wedjat* signifies blue and green. It is also the name for the well known *Eye of the Moon*,^[10] which later became the *Eye of Horus* and the *Eye of Ra* as additional sun deities arose. Indeed, in later times, she was often depicted simply as a woman with a snake's head, or as a woman wearing the uraeus. The uraeus originally had been her body alone, which wrapped around or was coiled upon the head of the pharaoh or another deity

Depicted as an Egyptian cobra she became confused with Renenutet, whose identity eventually merged with hers. As patron and protector, later Wadjet often was shown coiled upon the head of Ra, who much later became the Egyptian chief deity; in order to act as his protection, this image of her became the uraeus symbol used on the royal crowns as well.

Another early depiction of Wadjet is as a cobra entwined around a papyrus stem, beginning in the Predynastic era (prior to 3100 B.C.) and it is thought to be the first image that shows a snake entwined around a staff symbol. This is a sacred image that appeared repeatedly in the later images and myths of cultures surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, called the caduceus, which may have had separate origins.

Her image also rears up from the staff of the "flag" poles that are used to indicate deities, as seen in the hieroglyph for *uraeus* above and for *goddess* in other places.

Associations with other deities

An interpretation of the Milky Way was that it was the primal snake, Wadjet, the protector of Egypt. In this interpretation she was closely associated with Hathor and other early deities among the various aspects of the great mother goddess, including Mut and Naunet. The association with Hathor brought her son Horus into association also. The cult of Ra absorbed most of Horus's traits and included the protective eye of Wadjet that had shown her association with Hathor.

When identified as the protector of Ra, who was also a sun deity associated with heat and fire, she was sometimes said to be able to send fire onto those who might attack, just as the cobra spits poison into the eyes of its enemies.^[11] In this role she was called the *Lady of Flame*.

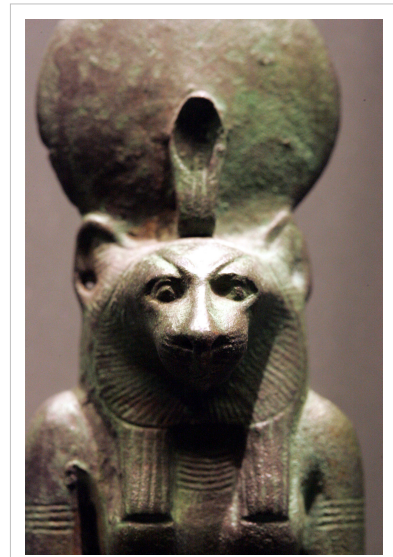
She later became identified with the war goddess of Lower Egypt, Bast, who acted as another figure symbolic of the nation, consequently becoming **Wadjet-Bast**. In this role, since Bast was a lioness, Wadjet-Bast was often depicted with a lioness head.

After Lower Egypt had been conquered by Upper Egypt and they were unified, the lioness goddess of Upper Egypt, Sekhmet, was seen as the more powerful of the two warrior goddesses. It was Sekhmet who was seen as the *Avenger of Wrongs*, and *the Scarlet Lady*, a reference to blood, as the one with bloodlust. She is depicted with the solar disk and Wadjet, however.

Eventually, Wadjet's position as patron led to her being identified as the more powerful goddess Mut, whose cult had come to the fore in conjunction with rise of the cult of Amun, and eventually being absorbed into her as the *Mut-Wadjet-Bast* triad.

When the pairing of deities occurred in later Egyptian myths, since she was linked to the land, after the unification of Lower and Upper Egypt she came to be thought of as the wife of Hapy, a deity of the Nile, which flowed through the land.^[12]

Wadjet is not to be confused with the Egyptian demon Apep, who is also represented as a snake in Egyptian mythology.



Wadjet as *Wadjet-Bast*, depicted as the body of a woman with a lioness head, wearing the uraeus

Footnotes

[1] Also spelled **Wadjit**, **Wedjet**, **Uadjet** or **Ua Zit**

[2] Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p.297

[3] *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, 1, 268.18

[4] Herodotus ii. 55 and vii. 134

[5] *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, 1, 268.17

[6] *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, 1, 263.7–264.4

[7] J. A. Coleman, *The Dictionary of Mythology: A–Z Reference of Legends and Heroes*

[8] Age of Mythology: In-Game Manual, Wadjet

[9] *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, 1, 268.16;

[10] *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache* 1, 268.13

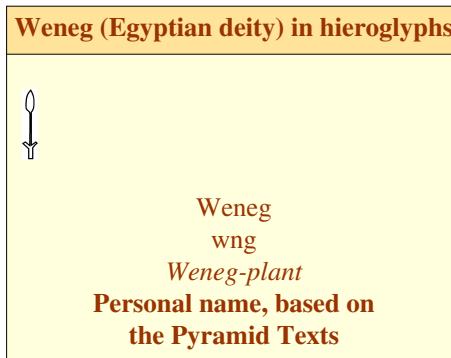
[11] Curl, *The Egyptian Revival*, p.469

[12] Ana Ruiz, *The Spirit of Ancient Egypt*, p.119

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- James Stevens Curl, *The Egyptian Revival: Ancient Egypt as the Inspiration for Design Motifs in the West*, Routledge 2005
 - Adolf Erman, Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, Berlin 1963
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-

Weneg (Egyptian deity)



Weneg (also read as **Uneg**) was a sky and death deity from ancient Egyptian religion, who was said to protect the earth and her inhabitants against the arrival of the "great chaos".

Mythology

The first known mention of a god named Weneg appears in a spell from the *Pyramid Texts* from the Sixth Dynasty, where he is described both as a death deity and as the deceased king. He is addressed as "Son of Ra". The texts contain several prayers asking that the king receive safe travel across the sky together with Ra in his celestial barque. The king is addressed by the name of Weneg.^[1]

PT 363; column 607c - d:

*Ra comes, ferry the king over to yonder side,
as thou ferriest thy follower over,
the **wng-plant**, which thou lovest!*^[2]

PT 476; column 952a - d:

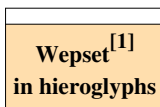
*O thou keeper of the way of the king, who art at the great gate,
certify the king to these two great and powerful gods,
for the king is indeed the **wng-plant**, the son of Ra,
which supports the sky, which governs the earth
and which will judge the gods!*^[3]

Weneg as a deity is sparsely attested. He appears only in another *Pyramid Text* spell from 6th dynasty, where he is identified and equated with the sky god Shu.^{[4][5][6]} The name 'Weneg' as a such is otherwise known only as the name of a king from the Second Dynasty, whose chronological position and length of reign is uncertain.^[7]

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- [1] Christian Leitz u.a.: *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen.*, vol. 7. Peeters, Leuven 2002, ISBN 90-429-1152-2, S. 418.
- [2] Pyramid text 363; column 607c - d (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/egy/pyt/pyt19.htm>) (english)
- [3] Pyramid text 476; column 952a - d (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/egy/pyt/pyt25.htm>) (english)
- [4] Georg Hart: *The Routledge dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*. Routledge 2005, ISBN 0415361168, page 162
- [5] Stephen Quirke: *Ancient Egyptian Religions*. London 1992, ISBN 0714109665, page 22
- [6] Adolf Erman: *Die Ägyptische Religion*. G. Reimer 2005, page 91
- [7] Jochem Kahl: *Ra is my Lord - Searching for the rise of the Sun God at the dawn of Egyptian history*, Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 2007, ISBN 3-447-05540-5, page 4–5.

Wepset



Wepset (*wps.t*) is an ancient Egyptian goddess. She is one of the personifications of the uraeus cobra that protected the kings; she is also an Eye of Ra and is mentioned as "the Eye" in the *Coffin Texts*. Her name means "she who burns". In New Kingdom texts she destroys the enemies of Osiris. She was mentioned as having a temple on the island of Biga; no such structure has been found there, but she appears in the temples of other deities here and in Lower Nubia.^[2]

Iconography

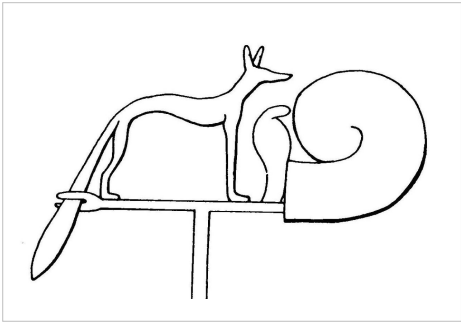
She is most often depicted as a snake, but in the Greek and Roman period she also has anthropomorphic depictions, as a woman with a lion's head or with uraeus or sun disk on her head.^[2]

Sources

[1] Wörterbuch, I., p.305

[2] Richard Wilkinson: The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt. London, Thames and Hudson, 2003. ISBN 978-0500051207 p.228

Wepwawet

Wepwawet or Upuaut	
	
Wepawet	
God of warfare and hunting	
Name in hieroglyphs	
Major cult center	Lycopolis
Symbol	the mace, hunting arrows
Parents	ambiguously either Set, or Anubis
Siblings	Anubis (in some accounts)

In late Egyptian mythology, **Wepwawet** (hieroglyphic *wp-w3w.t*; also rendered **Upuaut**, **Wep-wawet**, **Wepawet**, and **Ophois**) was originally a war deity, whose cult centre was Asyut in Upper Egypt (Lycopolis in the Greco-Roman period). His name means, *opener of the ways* and he is often depicted as a wolf standing at the prow of a solar-boat. Some interpret that Wepwawet was seen as a scout, going out to clear routes for the army to proceed forward.^[1] One inscription from the Sinai states that Wepwawet "opens the way" to king Sekhemkhet's victory.^[2]

Wepwawet originally was seen as a wolf deity, thus the Greek name of Lycopolis, meaning *city of wolves*, and it is likely the case that Wepwawet was originally just a symbol of the pharaoh, seeking to associate with wolf-like attributes, that later became deified as a mascot to accompany the pharaoh. Likewise, Wepwawet was said to accompany the pharaoh on hunts, in which capacity he was titled *(one with) sharp arrow more powerful than the gods*.



Ivory label depicting the pharaoh Den, found at his tomb in Abydos, circa 3000 BC. Originally attached to a pair of royal sandals, which is depicted on the reverse. The side shown here depicts the pharaoh striking down an Asiatic tribesman along with the inscription "The first occasion of smiting the East"

Over time, the connection to war, and thus to death, led to Wepwawet also being seen as one who opened the ways to, and through, Duat, for the spirits of the dead. Through this, and the similarity of the jackal to the wolf, Wepwawet became associated with Anubis, a deity that was worshiped in Asyut, eventually being considered his son. Seen as a jackal, he also was said to be Set's son. Consequently, Wepwawet often is confused with Anubis.^[2] This deity appears in the Temple of Seti I at Abydos.^[2]

In later Egyptian art, Wepwawet was depicted as a wolf or a jackal, or as a man with the head of a wolf or a jackal. Even when considered a jackal, Wepwawet usually was shown with grey, or white fur, reflecting his lupine origins. He was depicted dressed as a soldier, as well as carrying other military equipment—a mace and a bow.

For what generally is considered to be lauding purposes of the pharaohs, a later myth briefly was circulated claiming that Wepwawet was born at the sanctuary of Wadjet, the sacred site for the oldest

goddess of Lower Egypt that is located in the heart of Lower Egypt. Consequently, Wepwawet, who had hitherto been the standard of Upper Egypt alone, formed an integral part of royal rituals, symbolizing the unification of Egypt.

In later pyramid texts, Wepwawet is called "Ra" who has gone up from the horizon, perhaps as the "opener" of the sky.^[2] In the later Egyptian funerary context, Wepwawet assists at the Opening of the mouth ceremony and guides the deceased into the netherworld.^[2]

Animal origin

It would appear that a lack of comprehension of the animal species native to Egypt led European Egyptologists to mistake the deity Wepwawet for a jackal even while the Ancient Egyptians clearly identified it as a wolf.

The Egyptian Jackal (*Canis aureus lupaster*) also known as the African Wolf or Wolf Jackal is currently listed as a subspecies of the golden jackal but molecular and osteological data has established that it is a unique species in its own right. It is native to Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia, though its post-Pleistocene range once encompassed the Palestine region.

Its closest relatives are the Abyssinian Wolf, also known as the Red Wolf and the King Jackal, and the Indian Wolf. The dogs of ancient Egypt were likely domesticated subspecies of one or more of these enigmatic species.

References

[1] Pat Remler, *Egyptian Mythology A to Z: A Young Readers Companion*, Facts on File Inc., 2000. p. 170 Note: Remler's reference only states that Wepwawet's name means 'Opener of the ways'.

[2] Remler, p.170

Werethekau

Werethekau, alts. **Urthekau** and **Weret Hekau**, was the ancient Egyptian personification of supernatural powers, *weret hekau* meaning "great of magic" or "great enchantress".^[1]

In myth

As a deity dedicated to protection, she often appeared on funerary objects, particularly weapons, to allow the deceased to protect him or herself against the dangers of the underworld. She also was placed on ivory knives as a charm to protect pregnant and nursing mothers.^[citation needed]

Her power was one of the inherent qualities of the Crowns of Egypt. As goddess of the crowns she was a snake or a lion-headed woman and dwelt in the state sanctuary.^[2] As the wife of Ra-Horakhty she is depicted with his solar disk on her head. Werethekau was an epithet frequently conferred on Isis,^[3] Sekhmet,^[4] Mut,^[5] and others.



A relief representing Weret-hekau. From the reign of Ramesses II

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- [1] Barbara S. Lesko, *The great goddesses of Egypt*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, p 74
- [2] Manfred Lurker, *The Routledge Dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Devils and Demons*, Routledge 2004, ISBN 0-415-34018-7, p.192
- [3] Lurker, *op.cit.*, p.192
- [4] Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, Cornell University Press 1996, ISBN 0-8014-8384-0, p.284
- [5] Carol A. R. Andrews, *Amulets of Ancient Egypt*, University of Texas Press 1994, ISBN 0-292-70464-X, p.37

Wosret

Wosret Wikipedia:Manual_of_Style/Pronunciation, **Wasret**, or **Wosyet** meaning *the powerful* was an Egyptian goddess with a cult centre at Thebes. She was initially a localised guardian deity, whose cult rose widely to prominence during the stable twelfth dynasty when three pharaohs were named as her sons, for example, Senwosret (also spelled as Senusret) - *the man (son) of Wosret*.

She was rarely depicted, and no temples to her have been identified. One example of a depiction of Wosret is on the stela shown to the right where she is the figure farthest to the right.

When she was depicted, it was wearing a tall crown with the Was sceptre, which was related to her name, upon her head and carrying other weapons such as spears as well as a bow and arrows.

Wosret was later superseded by Mut and became an aspect of Hathor. She was also identified with the protection of the deity Horus, Isis' son, when he was young.

She was Amun's first wife (John Ray calls her "the theological equivalent of the girl next door"), and was replaced by Mut, although it is possible that Mut is simply a later name for Wosret.^[1] On the stela above Amun is depicted to the left.



Rare image of Wosret, the figure to the right on a dual stela of pharaoh Hatshepsut (centre left) in the blue Khepresh crown offering oil to the deity Amun and her nephew who would become Thutmose III behind her in the hedjet white crown - *Vatican Museum*

Footnotes

- [1] Ray, John *Reflections of Osiris: lives from ancient Egypt* p.28 (http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=ussoYIKONPIC&pg=PA28&dq=wosret+goddess+Mut&num=100&as_brr=3&ei=BG99S8nOBpWwNpTavdEE&client=firefox-a&cd=1#v=onepage&q=wosret+goddess+Mut&f=false)

Hellenic era

Harpocrates

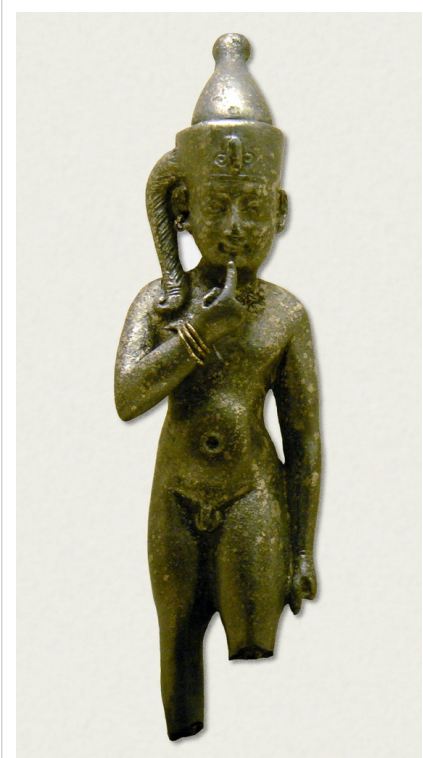
In late Greek mythology as developed in Ptolemaic Alexandria, **Harpocrates** (Ancient Greek: Ἄρποκράτης) is the god of silence. Harpocrates was adapted by the Greeks from the Egyptian child god Horus. To the ancient Egyptians, Horus represented the newborn Sun, rising each day at dawn. When the Greeks conquered Egypt under Alexander the Great, they transformed the Egyptian Horus into their Hellenistic god known as **Harpocrates**, a rendering from Egyptian *Har-pa-khered* or *Heru-pa-khered* (meaning "Horus the Child").

Horus

In Egyptian mythology, Horus was conceived by Isis, the mother goddess, from Osiris, the original god-king of Egypt, who had been murdered by his brother Set,^[1] and thus became the god of the underworld. The Greeks melded Osiris with their underworld god, Hades, to produce the essentially Alexandrian syncretism, Serapis.

Among the Egyptians the full-grown Horus was considered the victorious god of the Sun who each day overcomes darkness. He is often represented with the head of a sparrowhawk, which was sacred to him, as the hawk flies high above the Earth. Horus fought battles against Set, until he finally achieved victory and became the ruler of Egypt. All the Pharaohs of Egypt were seen as reincarnations of the victorious Horus.

Stelae depicting Heru-pa-Khered standing on the back of a crocodile, holding snakes in his outstretched hands were erected in Egyptian temple courtyards, where they would be immersed or lustrated in water; the water was then used for blessing and healing purposes as the name of Heru-pa-Khered was itself attributed with many protective and healing powers.



Ptolemaic bronze Harpocrates as the child Horus (Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon)



Isis, Serapis and their child
Harpocrates (Louvre Museum)

In the Alexandrian and Roman renewed vogue for mystery cults at the turn of the millennium — mystery cults had already existed for almost a millennium — the worship of Horus became widely extended, linked with Isis (his mother) and Serapis (Osiris, his father).

Harpocrates

In this way Harpocrates, the child Horus, personifies the newborn sun each day, the first strength of the winter sun, and also the image of early vegetation. Egyptian statues represent the child Horus, pictured as a naked boy with his finger on his mouth, a realization of the hieroglyph for "child" that is unrelated to the Greco-Roman and modern gesture for "silence". Misunderstanding this sign, the later Greeks and Roman poets made Harpocrates the god of Silence and Secrecy, taking their cue from Marcus Terentius Varro, who asserted in *De lingua Latina* of *Caelum* (Sky) and *Terra* (Earth)

"These gods are the same as those who in Egypt are called Serapis and Isis,^[2] though Harpocrates with his finger makes a sign to me to be quiet. The same first gods were in Latium called Saturn and Ops."

Ovid described Isis:

"Upon her Isis' brow stood the crescent moon-horns, garlanded with glittering heads of golden grain, and grace of royal dignity; and at her side the baying dog Anubis, dappled Apis, sacred Bubastis and the god who holds his finger to his lips for silence sake."^[3]



Bronze statuette of Harpocrates, Begram,
Afghanistan, 2nd century.

Inexpensive cast terracotta images of Harpocrates, suitable for house shrines, are found scattered throughout the Roman Empire. Thus Augustine of Hippo was aware of the iconic gesture of Harpocrates:

"And since in practically all the temples where Serapis and Isis were worshiped there was also a figure that seemed to enjoin silence by a finger pressed against its lips, Varro thinks this had the same meaning, that no mention should be made of their having been human beings"^[4]

Martianus Capella, author of an allegorizing textbook that remained a standard through the Middle Ages recognized the image of the "boy with his finger pressed to his lips" but neglected to mention Harpocrates' name: "...*quidam redimitus puer ad os compresso digito salutari silentium commonebat*. The boy was identified, however, as Cupid in glosses,^[5] a syncretism that had already resulted in the figure of Harpocratic Cupid (*illustration, right*).

Plutarch wrote that Harpocrates was the second son of Isis and that he was born prematurely with lame legs. Horus the Child became the special protector of children and their mothers. As he was healed of a poisonous snake bite by Re he became a symbol of hope in the gods looking after suffering humanity.^[6]

Another solar cult, not directly connected with Harpocrates, was that of the Unconquered Sun, *Sol Invictus*.

20th century reference

From the 1920s through the 1950s, Harpo Marx performed pantomime and wore either a curly red or curly blonde wig in character. His brother Groucho jokingly said he named himself in honour of Harpocrates, as a god of both silence and childhood, or childish joy. In truth he was named Harpo because he played the harp.^[1]

Modern occultist uses

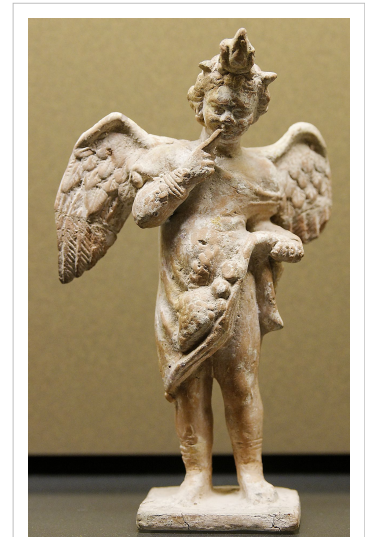
Modern occultists display his image, loosely connected now with Hermetic gnosticism. Typically, "Harpocrates is the Babe in the Egg of Blue that sits upon the lotus flower in the Nile". He may be termed the 'God of Silence' and said to represent the Higher Self and be the 'Holy Guardian Angel' and more in similar vein, adapted from Aleister Crowley's often-reprinted *Magick*.

Many Discordians consider Harpo Marx to have been a contemporary avatar of Harpocrates. Because of this, Discordians often invoke Harpocrates as a Trickster god or God of Humor in addition to his classical attribution of God of Silence.^[1]

References

- [1] The Hellenes, by *interpretatio graeca*, identified Set with Typhon, or Chaos.
- [2] Only by *interpretatio romana*; in actuality Serapis was a syncretic Hellenistic-Egyptian creation disseminated by Roman imperium, and Isis was linked in Egyptian culture with Osiris.
- [3] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 9:688 - 9:692.

aut stetit aut visa est. inerant lunaria fronti
cornua cum spicis nitido flaventibus auro
et regale decus; cum qua latrator Anubis,
sanctaque Bubastis, variusque coloribus Apis,
quique premit vocem digitoque silentia suadet;



Harpocratic Eros, terracotta figurine made in Myrina, ca. 100–50 BCE. (Louvre Museum)

(*Metamorphoses* on-line) (<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/OviLMet.html>)

[4] Augustine, *City of God*, XVIII.

[5] Dale Kinney, "Spolia from the Baths of Caracalla in Sta. Maria in Trastevere" *The Art Bulletin* **68.3** (September 1986:379-397, "Isis and Serapis in medieval mythography" p. 391 note 73.

[6] "*Egyptian Mythology*", Geraldine Pinch, p. 147, Oxford University Press US, 2004, ISBN 0-19-517024-5

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External links

- A brief definition (<http://www.kemet.org/glossary/heru-pa-khered.html>)
- Iconography of Harpocrates (PDF-article) (http://www.religionswissenschaft.unizh.ch/idd/prepublications/e_idd_harpocrates.pdf)
-  Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "Harpocrates". *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press.

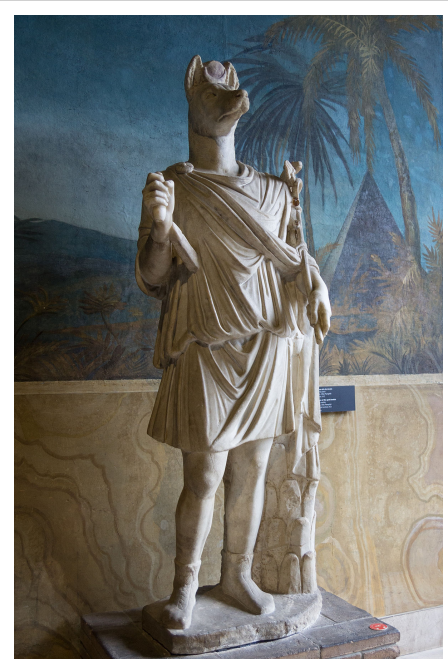
Hermanubis

In classical mythology, **Hermanubis** (Greek: Ἑρμανοῦβις) was a god who combined Hermes (Greek mythology) with Anubis (Egyptian mythology). He is the son of Set and Nephthys.

Hermes and Anubis's similar responsibilities (they were both conductors of souls) led to the god Hermanubis. He was popular during the period of Roman domination over Egypt. Depicted as having a human body and jackal head, with the sacred caduceus that belonged to the Greek god Hermes, he represented the Egyptian priesthood, engaged in the investigation of truth.^{[2][3]}

The divine name Ἑρμανοῦβις is known from a handful of epigraphic and literary sources, mostly of the Roman period. Plutarch cites the name as a designation of Anubis in his underworldly aspect, while Porphyry refers to Hermanubis as σύνθετος "composite" and μιξέλλην "half-Greek".^[4]

Although it was not common in traditional Greek religion to combine the names of two gods in this manner, the double determination of Hermanubis has some formal parallels in the earlier period. The most obvious is the god Hermaphroditus, attested from the fourth century BC onwards, but his name implies the paradoxical union of two different gods (Hermes and Aphrodite) rather than an assimilation in the manner of Hermanubis.



Statue of Hermanubis, white marble, 1st-2nd century AD (Vatican Museums)^[1]

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- *A history of Egypt Under Roman Rule* by Joseph Grafton Milne (1992) p. 195
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Notes

- [1] Statue of the god Anubis, Vatican Museums (http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/x-Schede/MEZs/MEZs_Sala04_07_014.html)
- [2] Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 61
- [3] Diodorus, *Bibliotheca historica* i.18, 87
- [4] Porphyry, *De imaginibus* fr. 8, p. 18. 1–2 Bidez

External links

- The Onomastic Evidence for the God Hermanubis (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/p/pod/dod-idx/onomastic-evidence-for-the-god-hermanubis.pdf?c=icp;idno=7523866.0025.116>) by Amin Benaissa
- Harry Thurston Peck, *Harpers Dictionary of Classical Antiquities* (1898) (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0062:entry=hermanubis-harpers&highlight=>), Perseus Project
- Statue of Hermanubis (Alexandria, early 2nd century CE) (<http://antiquities.bibalex.org/Collection/Detail.aspx?lang=en&a=1160>), Antiquities Museum of Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Hermes Trismegistus

Hermes Trismegistus (Ancient Greek: Ἑρμῆς ὁ Τρισμέγιστος, "thrice-greatest Hermes"; Latin: *Mercurius ter Maximus*) is the purported author of the Hermetic Corpus, a series of sacred texts that are the basis of Hermeticism.

Origin and identity

He may be a representation of the syncretic combination of the Greek god Hermes and the Egyptian god Thoth.^[1] In Hellenistic Egypt, the Greeks recognised the congruence of their god Hermes with Thoth.^[2] Subsequently the two gods were worshipped as one in what had been the Temple of Thoth in Khemnu, which the Greeks called Hermopolis.^[citation needed]

Both Thoth and Hermes were gods of writing and of magic in their respective cultures. Thus, the Greek god of interpretive communication was combined with the Egyptian god of wisdom as a patron of astrology and alchemy. In addition, both gods were psychopomps; guiding souls to the afterlife. The Egyptian Priest and Polymath Imhotep had been deified long after his death and therefore assimilated to Thoth in the classical and Hellenistic period.^[3] The renowned scribe Amenhotep and a wise man named Teôs were equally deified as gods of wisdom, science and medicine and thus placed alongside Imhotep in shrines dedicated to Thoth-Hermes during the Ptolemaic period.^[4] These associations to Thoth-Hermes could partially explain why some later Greek scholars linked Hermes Trismegistus to a hypothetical historical figure, given the numerous deifications.

A Mycenaean Greek reference found on a Linear B clay tablet at Pylos^[5] to a deity or semi-deity called *TI-RI-SE-RO-E*, *Trisheros* (the "thrice or triple hero"^[6]) could be connected to the later epithet "thrice wise" "Trismegistos", applied to Hermes/Thoth. On the same Tn 316 tablet as well as other Linear B tablets, found in Pylos and Knossos, appears the name of the deity "Hermes" as E-MA-A, but not in any apparent connection with the "Trisheros". This interpretation of poorly understood Mycenaean material is disputed, since Hermes Trismegistus is not referenced in any of the copious sources before he emerges in Hellenistic Egypt.

The majority of Greeks, and later Romans, did not accept Hermes Trismegistos in the place of Hermes.^[citation needed] The two gods remained distinct from one another. Cicero noted several individuals referred to as "Hermes": "the fifth, who is worshipped by the people of Pheneus [in Arcadia], is said to have killed Argus, and for this reason to have fled to Egypt, and to have given the Egyptians their laws and alphabet: he it is whom the Egyptians call Theyt."^[7] In the same place, Cicero mentions a "fourth Mercury (Hermes) was the son of the Nile, whose name may not be spoken by the Egyptians." The most likely interpretation of this passage is as two variants on the same syncretism of Greek Hermes and Egyptian Thoth (or sometimes other gods); the one viewed from the Greek-Arcadian perspective (the fifth, who went from Greece to Egypt), the other viewed from the Egyptian perspective (the fourth, where Hermes turns out "actually" to have been a "son of the Nile," i.e. a native god). Both these very good early references in Cicero (most ancient Trismegistus material is from early centuries CE) corroborate the view that Thrice-Great Hermes originated in Hellenistic Egypt through syncretism with Egyptian gods (the *Hermetica* refer most often to Thoth and Amun).^[8]



Hermes Trismegistus, floor mosaic in the Cathedral of Siena

The Hermetic literature added to the Egyptian concerns with conjuring spirits and animating statues that inform the oldest texts, Hellenistic writings of Greco-Babylonian astrology and the newly developed practice of alchemy (Fowden 1993: pp65–68). In a parallel tradition, Hermetic philosophy rationalized and systematized religious cult practices and offered the adept a method of personal ascension from the constraints of physical being, which has led to confusion of Hermeticism with Gnosticism, which was developing contemporaneously.^[9]

As a divine source of wisdom, Hermes Trismegistus was credited with tens of thousands of writings of high standing, reputed to be of immense antiquity. Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias* state that in the temple of Neith at Sais, there were secret halls containing historical records which had been kept for 9,000 years. Clement

of Alexandria was under the impression that the Egyptians had forty-two sacred writings by Hermes, encapsulating all the training of Egyptian priests. Siegfried Morenz has suggested (*Egyptian Religion*) "The reference to Thoth's authorship... is based on ancient tradition; the figure forty-two probably stems from the number of Egyptian nomes, and thus conveys the notion of completeness." The Neo-Platonic writers took up Clement's "forty-two essential texts".

The *Hermetica* is a category of papyri containing spells and initiatory induction procedures. In the dialogue called the *Asclepius* (after the Greek god of healing) the art of imprisoning the souls of demons or of angels in statues with the help of herbs, gems and odors, is described, such that the statue could speak and engage in prophecy. In other papyri, there are recipes for constructing such images and animating them, such as when images are to be fashioned hollow so as to enclose a magic name inscribed on gold leaf.

Thrice Great

The origin of the description *Trismegistus* or "thrice great" is unclear. Copenhaver reports that this name is first found in the minutes of a meeting of the council of the Ibis cult, held in 172 BCE near Memphis in Egypt.^[10] Fowden however asserts that the earliest occurrence of the name was in the *Athenagora* by Philo of Byblos circa 64–141 CE.^[11] Another explanation is that the name is derived from an epithet of Thoth found at the Temple of Esna, "Thoth the great, the great, the great."^[2] The date of his sojourn in Egypt in his last incarnation is not now known, but it has been fixed at the early days of the oldest dynasties of Egypt, long before the days of Moses. Some authorities regard him as a contemporary of Abraham, and some Jewish traditions go so far as to claim that Abraham acquired a portion of his mystical knowledge from Hermes himself (*Kybalion*).

Many Christian writers, including Lactantius, Augustine, Giordano Bruno, Marsilio Ficino, Campanella and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola considered Hermes Trismegistus to be a wise pagan prophet who foresaw the coming of Christianity.^{[12][13]} They believed in a *prisca theologia*, the doctrine that a single, true theology exists, which threads through all religions, and which was given by God to man in antiquity^{[14][15]} and passed through a series of prophets, which included Zoroaster and Plato. In order to demonstrate the verity of the *prisca theologia* Christians appropriated the Hermetic teachings for their own purposes. By this account Hermes Trismegistus was either, according to the fathers of the Christian church, a contemporary of Moses^[16] or the third in a line of men named Hermes, i.e. Enoch, Noah and the Egyptian priest king who is known to us as Hermes Trismegistus,^[17] or "thrice

great" on account of being the greatest priest, philosopher and king.^{[17][18]}

This last account of how Hermes Trismegistus received the appellation "Trismegistus," meaning "Thrice Great," is derived from statements in the *The Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus*, that he knows the three parts of the wisdom of the whole universe.^[19] The three parts of the wisdom are alchemy, astrology, and theurgy. The *Pymander*, from which Marsilio Ficino formed his opinion, states that "they called him Trismegistus because he was the greatest philosopher and the greatest priest and the greatest king".^[20]

Another explanation, in the *Suda* (10th century), is that "He was called Trismegistus on account of his praise of the trinity, saying there is one divine nature in the trinity."^[21]

Hermetic writings

The *Asclepius* and the *Corpus Hermeticum* are the most important of the *Hermetica*, writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, which survive. During the Renaissance it was accepted that Hermes Trismegistus was a contemporary of Moses, however after Casaubon's dating of the Hermetic writings as no earlier than the second or third century CE, the whole of Renaissance Hermeticism collapsed.^[22] As to their actual authorship:

“... they were certainly not written in remotest antiquity by an all wise Egyptian priest, as the Renaissance believed, but by various unknown authors, all probably Greeks, and they contain popular Greek philosophy of the period, a mixture of Platonism and Stoicism, combined with some Jewish and probably some Persian influences.”^[23]

Hermes Trismegistus is described in the *Corpus Hermeticum* in a Euhemerist fashion, as a man who became a god, or as a man who was the son of a god.^[citation needed]

Hermetic revival

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, known as *Hermetica*, enjoyed great prestige and were popular among alchemists. The "hermetic tradition" consequently refers to alchemy, magic, astrology and related subjects. The texts are usually divided into two categories: the "philosophical", and the "technical" hermetica. The former deals mainly with issues of philosophy, and the latter with practical magic, potions and alchemy. Spells to magically protect objects, for example, are the origin of the expression "Hermetically sealed".

The classical scholar Isaac Casaubon in *De rebus sacris et ecclesiasticis exercitationes XVI* (1614) showed, through an analysis of the Greek language used in the texts, that those texts which were believed to be of ancient origin were in fact much more recent: most of the "philosophical" *Corpus Hermeticum* can be dated to around AD 300. However, flaws in this dating were discerned by the 17th century scholar Ralph Cudworth, who argued that Casaubon's allegation of forgery could only be applied to three of the seventeen treatises contained within the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Moreover, Cudworth noted Casaubon's failure to acknowledge the codification of these treatises as a late formulation of a pre-existing oral tradition. According to Cudworth, the texts must be viewed as a *terminus ad quem* and not a *quo*.^[24]

In Islamic tradition

Sayyid Ahmed Amiruddin has pointed out that Hermes Trismegistus has a major place in Islamic tradition. He writes, "Hermes Trismegistus is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in verse 19:56-57: "Mention, in the Book, Idris, that he was truthful, a prophet. We took him up to a high place". The Jabirian corpus contains the oldest documentable source for the Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus, translated for the Hashemite Caliph of Baghdad, Harun al-Rashid the Abbasid. Jābir ibn Hayyān (Gerber), a Shiite, identified as Jābir al-Sufi, was student of Ja'far al-Sadiq, Husayn ibn 'Ali's great grandson. For the Abbasid's and the Alid's, the knowledge of Hermes Trismegistus was considered sacred, and an inheritance of the Ahl al-Bayt. These writings were recorded by the Ikhwan al-Safa, and

subsequently translated from Arabic into Persian, Turkish, Hebrew, Russian, and into English by Isaac Newton, reviving illumination in men of these great human civilizations. These profound teachings enabled the Arabs to contribute the inventions mentioned in the educational project 1001 Inventions and enabled other great civilizations to further advance the greatness of mankind. In the writings, the Master of Masters, Hermes Trismegistus is identified as Idris (prophet) the infallible Prophet who traveled to outer space from Egypt, to heaven, where Adam and the Black Stone he brought with him when he landed on earth in India,^[25] originated. According to ancient Arab genealogists, Muhammad the Prophet, who also is believed to have traveled to outer space on the night of Isra and Mi'raj to the heavens is a direct lineal descendant of Hermes Trismegistus. Ibn Kathir said, "*As for Idris...He is in the genealogical chain of the Prophet Muhammad, except according to one genealogist..Ibn Ishaq says he was the first who wrote with the Pen. There was a span of 380 years between him and the life of Adam. Many of the scholars allege that he was the first to speak about this, and they call him Thrice-Great Hermes [Hermes Trismegistus]*".^[25] Ahmad al-Buni considered himself a follower of the hermetic teachings and his contemporary Ibn Arabi mentioned Hermes Trismegistus in his writings. The Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya of Ibn Arabi speaks of his travels to 'vast cities (outside earth), possessing technologies far superior then ours'^[26] and meeting with the Twelfth Imam, the Ninth (generation) from the Third (al-Husayn the third Imam) (Amiruddin referring here to the Masters of Wisdom from the Emerald Tablet), who also ascended to the heavens, and is still alive like his ancestor Hermes Trismegistus".^[27]

Antoine Faivre, in *The Eternal Hermes* (1995) has pointed out that Hermes Trismegistus has a place in the Islamic tradition, though the name *Hermes* does not appear in the *Qur'an*. Hagiographers and chroniclers of the first centuries of the Islamic Hegira quickly identified Hermes Trismegistus with Idris,^[28] the *nabi* of surahs 19.57 and 21.85, whom the *Arabs* also identified with Enoch (cf. Genesis 5.18–24). Idris/Hermes was termed "Thrice-Wise" Hermes Trismegistus because he had a threefold origin: the first Hermes, comparable to Thoth, was a "civilizing hero," an initiator into the mysteries of the divine science and wisdom that animate the world: he carved the principles of this sacred science in hieroglyphs. The second Hermes, in Babylon, was the initiator of Pythagoras. The third Hermes was the first teacher of alchemy. "A faceless prophet," writes the Islamicist Pierre Lory, "Hermes possesses no concrete or salient characteristics, differing in this regard from most of the major figures of the Bible and the Quran."^[29] A common interpretation of the representation of "Trismegistus" as "thrice great" recalls the three characterizations of Idris: as a messenger of god, or a prophet; as a source of wisdom, or *hikmet* (wisdom from *hokmah*); and as a king of the world order, or a "sultanate." These are referred to as, *müselles bin ni'me*.

In the Bahá'í writings

Bahá'u'lláh, founder of the Bahá'í Faith, in a Tablet identifies Idris with Hermes.^[30] He does not, however, specifically name Idris as the prophet of the Sabians.

New Age revival

Modern occultists suggest that some Hermetic texts may be of Pharaonic origin, and that the legendary "forty-two essential texts" that contain the core Hermetic religious beliefs and philosophy of life remain hidden in a secret library.

In some trance "readings" of Edgar Cayce, Hermes or Thoth was an engineer from the submerged Atlantis, who also built, designed or directed the construction of the Pyramids of Egypt.

Spiritualist writer Tom DeLiso claims that Hermes Trismegistus taught him in out-of-body states^[31] and that Hermes Trismegistus is a newer incarnation of Thoth. Both are conscious energy constructs without bodies.^[32]

The book *Kybalion*, by "The Three Initiates", addresses Hermetic principles.

In the *Ægypt* sequence, John Crowley both observes and parodies the New Age interest in Hermetica, as well as through his protagonist Pierce, suggests ways Hermetic principles remain relevant to modern life.

Within the occult tradition, Hermes Trismegistus is associated with several wives, and more than one son who took his name, as well as more than one grandson^[citation needed]. This repetition of given name and surname throughout the generations may at least partially account for the legend of his longevity, especially as it is believed that many of his children pursued careers as priests in mystery religions^[citation needed].

Popular culture

In the novel *Heresy* by S J Parris one of the central themes is the search by Giordano Bruno for a lost work by Hermes Trimegistus.

In the videogame *Persona 3* a character named Junpei wields a persona named Hermes which later morphs into Trismegistus.

In the 1983 movie *The Keep*, Hermes Trismegistus (Scott Glenn) battles his ancient foe Molesar in the keep that was his prison, when Wermacht troops unwittingly release him while subjugating Romania in 1941.

Notes

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- [7] *De natura deorum* III, Ch. 56
- [8] Mercurius unus Caelo patre (<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/nd3.shtml#56>)
- [9] Dan Merkur, *Stages of Ascension in Hermetic Rebirth*. (<http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/Merkur.html>)
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- [16] Yates, F., "Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition", Routledge, London, 1964, p 27 and p 293
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- [19] (Scully p. 322)
- [20] Copenhaver, *Hermetica*, p. xlviii
- [21] Copenhaver, *Hermetica*, p. xli
- [22] Haanegraaff, W. J., *New Age Religion and Western Culture*, Brill, Leiden, New York, 1996, p 390
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- [25] *Prophets in the Quran: An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis*, p.46. Wheeler, Brannon. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002
- [26] Thomson, Ahmad. Dajjal, page 10
- [27] <http://ahmedamiruddin.wordpress.com/>
- [28] Kevin Van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes. From pagan sage to prophet of science*, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 168 "Abu Mas'har's biography of Hermes, written approximately between 840 and 860, would establish it as common knowledge."
- [29] (Faivre 1995 pp. 19–20)
- [31] Hermes Trismegistus at Wisdomdoor / Reality Creator Books (<http://www.wisdomsdoor.com/faq.htm#channeled>)
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External links

- *Corpus Hermeticum* (<http://www.gnosis.org/library/hermet.htm>) along with the complete text of G.R.S. Mead's classic work, *Thrice Greatest Hermes*.
- Hermetic Research (<http://www.hermeticresearch.org>) is a Portal on Hermetic study and discussion.
- Dan Merkur, "Stages of Ascension in Hermetic Rebirth" (<http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/Merkur.html>)
- Asclepius (<http://www.aussagenlogik.org/asclepius-mercurii-trismegisti-dialogus/>) - Latin text of the edition Paris: Henricus Stephanus 1505.
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- THE DIVINE PYMANDER of Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus in English (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/eso/pym/index.htm>)
- Online Galleries, History of Science Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries (<http://hos.ou.edu/galleries/01Ancient/HermesTrismegistus/>) High resolution images of works by Hermes Trismegistus in .jpg and .tiff format.
- The Great Pyramid and the 153 Fish in the Net (<http://www.greatdreams.com/numbers/jerry/153.htm>) Mathematical Explanation of where he got his name

Nilus (mythology)

Nilus, in Greek mythology, was the son of Oceanus and Tethys. He represented the god of the Nile river itself and was father to several children. Of these included Memphis (mother of Libya by Epaphus a king of Egypt), as well as a son named Nilus Ankhmemiphis (the father of Anchinoe and Telephassa).

His granddaughter Libya in turn became mother to Belus and Agenor. These sons then married (presumably) younger daughters of his son Nilus named Anchiroe and Telephassa respectively. His other children include: Chione, Anippe, and (possibly) Caliadne and Polyxo. Though he represented the Nile, Nilus's overall importance in Greek mythology is very small. Had he been an Egyptian god his importance would have been much greater.

Osiris-Dionysus

The term **Osiris-Dionysus** is used by Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy^[1] to refer to a group of deities worshipped around the Mediterranean in the centuries prior to the emergence of Christianity. Freke and Gandy argue that these deities were closely related and shared many characteristics, most notably being male, partly human, born of virgins, life-death-rebirth deities and other similar characteristics.^[2]

Ancient syncretism

The Egyptian god Osiris and the Greek god Dionysus had been equated as long ago as the 5th century BC by the historian Herodotus (see *interpretatio graeca*). By Late Antiquity, some Gnostic and Neoplatonist thinkers had expanded this syncretic equation to include Aion, Adonis, Attis, Mithras and other gods of the mystery religions. The composite term Osiris-Dionysus is found around the start of the first century BC, for example in *Aegyptiaca* by Hecateus of Abdera, and in works by Leon of Pella.^[citation needed]

Modern era

In the 19th century, the idea of a pan-Mediterranean cult of the dying-and-rising demigod was used by Alexander Hislop in his anti-Roman Catholic treatise *The Two Babylons*. Hislop argued that Roman Catholicism was based not upon Biblical Christianity, but upon pagan cults of the divine mother goddess and her suffering son (e.g. Cybele and Attis, etc.).

Later authors, such as Peter Gandy and Timothy Freke, have expanded this line of reasoning to encompass not merely Roman Catholicism, but Christianity more generally. Their book, *The Jesus Mysteries*, contends that Jesus was not an historical figure, but rather a mythic product of the same pan-Mediterranean mythic complex that also yielded Osiris, Dionysus and other similar figures.

References

[1] see, e.g., *The Jesus Mysteries: Was the "Original Jesus" a Pagan God?* by Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy, ISBN 0-722-53677-1

[2] Freke and Gandy, *Jesus Mysteries*, p. 5.

Misc

Aaru

"Reed fields" redirects here. For the natural habitat, see Reed bed. For the use of reeds to filter wastewater, see Constructed wetland. For the Tamil film, see Aaru (film).

In ancient Egyptian mythology, the fields of **Aaru** (Wikipedia:Manual_of_Style/Pronunciation; Egyptian: *iArw* meaning "reeds") (alternatives: *Yaaru*, *Iaru*, *Aalu*) or the **Egyptian reed fields**, are the heavenly paradise, where Osiris ruled after he became part of the Egyptian pantheon and displaced Anubis in the Ogdoad tradition. It has been described as the *ka* (a part of the soul) of the Nile Delta.

Only souls who weighed exactly the same as the feather of the goddess Ma'at were allowed to start a long and perilous journey to Aaru, where they would exist in pleasure for all eternity. The ancient Egyptians believed that the soul resided in the heart. Those whose heart did not match the weight of the feather of Ma'at due to their sins were excluded.^[1] They were said to suffer a *second death* when devoured by another being, Ammit, while still in Duat for judgment.

The souls who did qualify had to undergo a long journey and face many perils before reaching Aaru. Once they arrived, they had to enter through a series of gates. The exact number of gates varies according to sources, some say 15, some 21. They are however uniformly described as being guarded by evil demons armed with knives.

Aaru usually was placed in the east, where the Sun rises, and is described as eternal reed fields, very much like those of the earthly Nile delta: an ideal hunting and fishing ground, and hence, those deceased who, after judgment, were allowed to reside there, were often called the eternally living. More precisely, Aaru was envisaged as a series of islands, covered in "fields of rushes" (*Sekhet Aaru*), *Aaru* being the Egyptian word for rushes. The part where Osiris later dwelt was sometimes known as the "field of offerings", *Sekhet Hetepet* in Egyptian.

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External links

- Egyptian Field of Reeds (Aaru) and Christian Heaven (<http://www.aldokkan.com/religion/field.htm>)
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Astennu

This is a page about the mythical creature. For the black metal musician, see Astennu (musician).

In Egyptian mythology, **Astennu** (also spelt **Asten**, **Isten**, **Astes**, and **Isdes**) refers to a baboon associated with Thoth. It was also stated that **Astennu** was merely another aspect of Thoth, as the god could take the form of a baboon.^[1] He was one of four baboons who stood around the lake of fire at the place of judgement in Duat, and consequently associated with Utennu.

He appears in spell 17 of the Book of the Dead. The name Astennu means the moon.

Baboon may be an equivalent term for dog-headed ape. Among the Egyptians several kinds of apes were regarded as sacred animals, but the most revered of all was that which was the companion of Thoth, and which is commonly known as the Dog-headed Ape. This animal seems to have been brought in old, as in modern, times from the country far to the south of Nubia, but whether this be so or not it is certain that the Cynocephalus ape found its way into Egyptian mythology at a very early period.^[citation needed] In the Judgment Scene he sits upon the standard of the Great Scales, and his duty was to report to his associate Thoth when the pointer marked the middle of the beam.^[2]

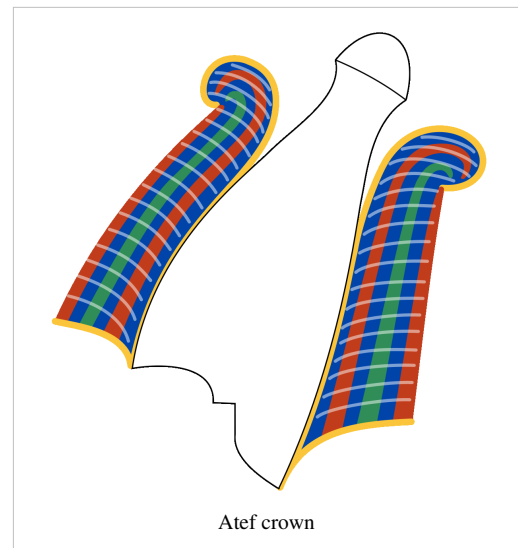
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Atef

Atef is the specific feathered white crown of the Egyptian Deity Osiris. It combines the Hedjet, the crown of Upper Egypt, with red ostrich feathers for the Osiris cult. The feathers are identified as ostrich from their curl or curve at the upper ends, with a slight flare toward the base. They are the same feather as (singly) worn by Ma'at. The crown is also worn by Sobek. They may be compared with the falcon tail feathers in two-feather crowns, such as those of Amun which are more narrow and straight without curve.

The Atef crown identifies Osiris in ancient Egyptian painting. Osiris wears the Atef crown as a symbol of the ruler of the underworld. The tall bulbous white piece in the center of the crown is between two ostrich feathers. The feathers represent truth, justice, morality, and balance.^[citation needed] The Atef crown is similar, save for the feathers, to the plain white crown (Hedjet) used in the Predynastic Period and later as a symbol for pharaonic Upper Egypt.



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Benben

Benben or **Ben-ben**, in Egyptian mythology, specifically in the Heliopolitan tradition, was the mound that arose from the primordial waters, Nu, and on which the creator god Atum settled. In the Pyramid Texts, e.g. Utterances 587 and 600, Atum himself is at times referred to as "mound". It was said to have turned into a small pyramid, located in Annu, which was the place Atum was said to dwell within. Other cities developed their own myths of the primeval mound. At Memphis the god Tatenen, an earth god and the origin of *all things in the shape of food and viands, divine offers, all good things* was the personification of the primeval mound.

Benben stone

The Benben stone, named after the mound, was a sacred stone in the solar temple of Heliopolis. It was the location on which the first rays of the sun fell. It is thought to have been the prototype for later obelisks, and the capstones of the great pyramids were based on its design. Their tips (pyramidia) were probably gilded. The phoenix, the bennu bird, was venerated at Heliopolis, where it was said to be living on the Benben or on the holy willow. According to B Kemp the connection between the benben, the phoenix, and the sun may well have been based on alliteration: the rising, *weben*, of the sun sending its rays towards the benben, on which the benu bird lives. Utterance 600 of the Pyramid Texts speaks of Atum as *you rose up, as the benben, in the Mansion of the Benu in Heliopolis* (Hart, p.16).

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Kneph

In Ancient Egyptian religious art, **Kneph** refers to a motif, variously a winged egg, a globe surrounded by one or more serpents, or Amun in the form of a serpent called Kematef.^[1] Some Theosophical sources tried to syncretize this motif with the deity Khnum, along with Serapis and Pluto.^{[2][3]}

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Maat Kheru

Maat Kheru // "True of Voice" in hieroglyphs
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Maat Kheru (Egyptian: *mꜣꜣ ḫrw*) is a phrase meaning "true of voice" or "justified"^[1] or "the acclaim given to him is 'right'".^[2] The term is involved in ancient Egyptian afterlife beliefs, according to which deceased souls had to be judged morally righteous. Once the soul had passed the test, the Weighing of the Heart, he or she was judged to be *mꜣꜣ ḫrw* and was allowed to enter the afterlife.^[1]

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Matet boat

In Egyptian mythology the **Matet Boat** was the first of two boats traveled in by Ra, the sun god as he traveled the sky daily with the sun on his head. During the period between dawn and noon, Ra occupies the Matet (growing stronger) boat. During the period between noon and dusk Ra travels in the Sektet (growing weaker) boat. Ra travels the underworld during the night where he encounters and battles many foes. Matet and Sektet seem to have many different spellings and Ra himself is often mixed with another or sometimes several deities dependent upon the period and various locations throughout ancient Egypt.

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Nebu

Nebu is the Egyptian symbol for gold. It depicts a golden collar with the ends hanging off the sides and seven spines dangling from the middle.

Ancient Egyptians believed that gold was an indestructible and heavenly metal. The sun god, Ra, was often referred to as a mountain of gold. The Royal Tomb, in fact, known as the "House of Gold". The Pharaohs of the Old Kingdom were called the "Golden Horus". The skin of gods and other deities was said to be golden. In Middle Egyptian the hieroglyph for nebu is It was sometimes followed by the goddess determinative: - this changed its meaning to "the Golden One", an epithet of Hathor.[□] The Ancient Egyptian name for the city of Ombos, Nebet, also used the nebu hieroglyph.[□]

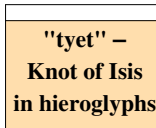
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Seqtet boat

The **Seqtet boat** is the second six hours of the day (from noon till nightfall) in Ancient Egyptian belief. It was preceded by the Matet boat. The Seqtet boat is represented by the Sun as Ra, and Ra as a boat since it sails across the sky like a boat on water. This belief depends on the era and city.

Tyet



The **tyet**Wikipedia:Manual_of_Style/Pronunciation is an ancient Egyptian symbol of the goddess Isis; its exact origin is unknown. In many respects the tyet resembles an ankh, except that its arms curve down. Its meaning is also reminiscent of the ankh, as it is often translated to mean "welfare" or "life". It seems to be called "the **Knot of Isis**" because it resembles a knot used to secure the garments that the Egyptian gods wore (also tet, buckle of Isis, girdle of Isis, and the blood of Isis). The meaning of "the Blood of Isis" is more obscure, but it was often used as a funerary amulet made of a red stone or of glass. It is also speculated that the Tyet represents the menstrual blood flow from Isis' womb and its magical properties.^{[1][2][3]}

It is mentioned in the 156th spell for the *Book of the Dead*:Wikipedia:Citing sources#What information to include

"You possess your blood, Isis, you possess your power, Isis, you possess your magic, Isis. The amulet is a protection for this Great One, which will drive off anyone who would perform a criminal act against him."

In all these cases it seems to represent the ideas of resurrection and eternal life.

The symbol can be compared with the Minoan sacral knot, a symbol of a knot with a projecting loop found in Knossos of Crete.

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Was

The *was* ("power, dominion") sceptre is a symbol that appeared often in relics, art, and hieroglyphics associated with the ancient Egyptian religion. It appears as a stylized animal head at the top of a long, straight staff with a forked end.

Was sceptres were used as symbols of power or dominion, and were associated with the gods (such as Set or Anubis)^[1] as well as with the pharaoh. *Was* sceptres also represent the Typhonic beast or Set-animal (the mascot of the Egyptian god Set). In later use, it was a symbol of control over the force of chaos that Set represented.

In a funerary context the *was* sceptre was responsible for the well-being of the deceased, and was thus sometimes included in the tomb equipment or in the decoration of the tomb or coffin. The sceptre is also considered an amulet. The Egyptians perceived the sky as being supported on four pillars, which could have the shape of *was* sceptres. The *was* sceptre is also the symbol of the fourth Upper Egyptian nome, the nome of Thebes (called *Waset* in Egyptian).^[2]

Was sceptres were depicted as being carried by gods, pharaohs, and priests. They commonly occur in paintings, drawings, and carvings of gods, and often parallel with emblems such as the *ankh* and the *djed*-pillar. Remnants of real *was* sceptres have been found, constructed of faience or wood, where the head and forked tail of the Set-animal are visible, with the earliest examples dating back to the times of the first dynasty.

The *was* (*wꜥs*) is also the Egyptian hieroglyphic character that stands for a word meaning *power*.



A *was* sceptre, carried by the god Set, in the tomb of Thutmose III

Was in hieroglyphs

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